

THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

NOBODY would imagine from the crowded state of our markets that we are possibly within a few months of famine. Yet now that it appears that war is to continue and that Germany will be making fanatical efforts to blockade us, the risks of famine are within practical speculation. With a third of our present population we had three times our present wheat production upon which to carry through the Napoleonic Wars; and it therefore stands to reason that, in spite of our increased wealth, our security is more precarious to-day than it was then. Meanwhile, notwithstanding all the talk there has been about it, the national organisation of our agriculture is still no more than a phrase. Statistics accumulate, speeches are made, various bodies run here and there in a highly paid state of excitement, but the only visible result is that after over two years of war our agricultural production has declined and is still declining. It is said that the farmers are in the way and that even the sacred caste of landlords are none too anxious to devote their estates to the commonweal. One of the Northants farmers, for example, recently remarked in public that at the State-guaranteed price of sixty shillings a quarter, he should grind his wheat for cattle-food. And as for the landlords, we may deduce their state of mind from the care found necessary in dealing with them. Their absolute consent, we are told, is first to be invited to any policy the State may pursue; and in the event of a difference of opinion (about famine, you understand) the dispute is to be referred to a special local committee whose decision shall be final. Why all this tenderness, however, towards classes that can plainly be seen to be standing in the nation's way? Everybody knows that farmers and landlords have hitherto been doing very well out of the war, if making profit means doing well. Everybody knows, moreover, that they hold in trust the very means by which the nation can live. If after this period of prosperity and when it has now come to the prospect of famine they are to be treated with tender consideration, the reason must be that the State fears farmers and landlords more than it loves England.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that Mr. Prothero, who now has the matter in hand, is getting to grips with the subject. On the contrary, he appears to us to be getting entangled in it. A statesman, suddenly called upon to organise agriculture against a prospective siege, would assuredly spend a day or two in forming some large generalisation to guide him in the maze of detail into which he would later be bound to plunge. Instead of sitting down immediately to "nibble" at the problem—after the manner of generals who cannot generalise—he would first consider whether a spacious and simple plan might not be devised as a guide both to himself and others. Suppose, for example, that he decided to treat England as a single farm and to regard the existing farmers and labourers as the nucleus of an agricultural army—it would not be necessary pedantically to pursue this idea in the smallest detail, but the plan would serve both as a direction and criterion of the thousand and one activities that need to be taken. Or suppose that it were decided to apply the Munitions Act to agriculture and to make of every farm a controlled establishment, would not that general plan afford a simple guide to organisation such as even its meanest agents might understand? Mr. Prothero, however, appears to be a practical farmer, and nothing more, with a country-gentleman's capacity and outlook; and all that he appears able to do is to invent one little scheme after another in the hope that by some alchemy their very multitude will make a unity. Our anticipation, on the other hand, is that, far from making a whole, the complex multiplicity will cancel out to zero. What is gained in this part of the field will be lost in another part, so that in the end it will be found that the actual aggregate of production is no more than it would have been if Mr. Prothero had never been appointed. That they manage these things better in France we can very well believe, though the formal evidence is denied us. What, however, is to be gained by concealing from our public the means by which France maintains her civil life we cannot guess. It is obvious that in many respects French civil organisation must be superior to ours, since the problem in France is more difficult than ours, while its solution is at least equal. With a smaller population, with a greater proportion of men under arms, with a considerable slice of her

territory in enemy hands, and with an inferior mercantile marine, France nevertheless has managed to keep the price of bread much lower than the price of bread in England. What is the reason for it? We do not know for certain; and, as we say, our Press takes good care to tell us nothing upon the subject; but we believe that if the causes were examined, they would be found to include first and foremost a national organisation of agriculture such as we are years from seeing established in this country. In France, as we happen to know, the profiteering farmer is at least under public control. He would not be allowed to threaten to take the bread from the people and to feed his cattle on it. We should say, indeed, that a French farmer who made such a threat in public would find himself laid by the heels by the State, if not by his neighbours, amid general approval. Is there not something for Mr. Prothero to learn from France?

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The incapacity for general ideas which Mr. Prothero has so far shown is not, unfortunately, peculiar to him. Lord Devonport, in his treatment of the problem of food-control, is seen to be labouring under the same disability. We have always urged that, short of the equalisation of income, the only means of distributing food fairly is to commandeer both the sources of supply and the existing means of distribution and to administer both as national services. Such a scheme, we venture to say, even if it were not carried out to the last detail, would enable us to spread our resources evenly and economically over the whole population to the infinite advantage of both ourselves and of our supplies. Lord Devonport, however, like Mr. Prothero, is a "nibbler" in a matter where he should be a strategist and statesman; and he has so far been content with issuing what may be called wholesale orders upon a retail scale. And the only result that we can foresee from this course is the result we anticipate from his colleague's policy, namely, the extinction of every advantage by an equal disadvantage. Is it possible, in fact, to point to any measure taken by Lord Devonport that has not already been proved to have this effect? For every economy effected an equal extravagance has been created, so that when the sum of inconvenience is made up we shall find that we are not a whit better off for all our trouble. This, however, is not the case with the control recently extended to shipping. Shipping, on the contrary, presents the very different spectacle of an industry organised, it is true, and now in process of being even more efficiently organised—but organised for its own advantage! Agriculture and food, because they are under the observation of everybody, must be, at any rate, organised as if with a view to public advantage. But the organisation of shipping, whose control is carried on in a corner, need be only ostensibly national, while, in fact, it may be and is exclusively private and capitalist. Is it necessary, we wonder, to set out the evidence of this? And can it be so set out that our readers may not doubt the conclusion we have drawn? The evidence is to be found in the proposal, now actually being carried out, to construct on the State's responsibility and by means of State-controlled labour, standardised merchant ships, whose eventual owners and present directors are private shipping capitalists. The frigid impudence of this is almost past belief, yet it will pass in the crowd without any comment.

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We can only deal on the present occasion with one or two points in connection with the new War-loan, the prospectus of which is to be issued this week. And the first is the fact that the State is borrowing again. This, which appears to be a meaningless truism, is a profound discovery, the consequences of which ought to be drawn out and faced by every citizen. For a State can no more borrow extravagantly with impunity than an individual, and it behoves us all, who are necessarily involved in the State's liabilities, to consider what future

the State is preparing for us. Look, in the first place, at the amount for which the State is making us liable. By the end of the next financial year we calculate that our total liabilities will be little short of four thousand millions. And look, in the second place, at the relative proportions of borrowers and lenders. All told, the number of lenders will be no more than five million, while the borrowers are the remaining forty millions of the population. The arithmetical sum that can be worked out upon these figures is simple; and it results in establishing this fact, that of every nine persons amongst us at the end of the war, eight will owe the ninth about £800. In other words, every soul of the forty million persons will owe a hundred pounds to one or other of the five million moneylenders now kindly enabling the nation to maintain its honour. There is surely something wrong in a state of things that can work out to this result. And anybody can see it. Let us put it again. At the end of the war, in the course of which everybody will have been "doing his bit" in the national cause, the State will owe to a small class, mainly composed of its own citizens, the sum of four thousand million pounds, which sum it must thereafter collect from all of us, and repay to the small class with interest. If the existence of such an indemnity to be paid by the State at the end of the war to a small class is not an anomaly in a united nation, we do not know of one. And it is obvious on the smallest reflection that here is something wrong.

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What is it? It is the assumption, and the organisation of the nation upon the assumption, that a national war does not differ essentially from any other national undertaking; and hence that it is as proper for the State to borrow and its citizens to lend money to carry on war as for any other purpose. Suppose the State were to undertake to reclaim considerable areas of land, to exploit a colonial territory, or to purchase the railways—the capital sums required might, it is commonly allowed, be raised by loan upon interest in the expectation that the State out of the proceeds of its work would be able both to repay the loan and to make a profit for itself. Such, in fact, is the reasoning upon which the policy of State loans rests; and if it were the case that a national war were a similarly productive undertaking, potentially able to repay its cost and more than its cost, the argument applied to ordinary State expenditure might be applied to State expenditure upon war. But the point scarcely needs to be made that a State-war, and, above all, a national war such as the present, is not in any respect comparable with any other kind of national undertaking. Not only is it not voluntary and productive, but it is a calamity forced upon the nation in which there is no profit to be made whatever. Does anybody in the world think that the present war is going to pay us in the ordinary sense of the word; that the State is going to profit by it, or the nation to become richer for it? Are war-investments capital investments in any sense? But if they are not, if the expenditure by the State is an imposed dead loss on the nation, if we cannot, as a nation, look to recover a penny of it, the contrast between a loan for such a war and a loan for State production is obvious. And the conclusion ought to follow that war should be financed upon a different principle from the principle applied to other national undertakings; that, in short, expenditure upon war should not be regarded as a capital expenditure, but as a loss to be written off. We are aware that to people hopelessly ingrained with commercial prejudices the proposal to finance a war by voluntary gifts or by compulsory confiscation of capital must seem stark lunacy. On the other hand, to finance a national war as if it were a productive undertaking must no less seem stark lunacy to people who can discriminate between the two forms of activity. So few, however, are the latter that the dispute has scarcely arisen outside these

pages; and we must, therefore, be prepared to see the State continue to borrow and the wealthy classes to lend for all the world as if the war were to exploit Eldorado.

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No more than Mr. Prothero or Lord Devonport is Mr. Bonar Law, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, a man of general ideas. Like his predecessor in the same office, he, too, before even attempting to think out the problem of national finance *de novo*, has gone post-haste to the City to consult with private bankers how their axes may be ground. The "heroic" measure, therefore, that he has taken in issuing a new long-term loan in place of Treasury bills and bonds may be regarded as the City's provision for its own interest; and the jubilation that has arisen in financial circles is the proof that the City has impressed Mr. Bonar Law to its own advantage. Averting our eyes from the indecent spectacle of our wealthy classes treating the war-loan like any other loan, we may inquire what general principles a Chancellor of the Exchequer might have followed. They are two: to borrow as little as possible; and to tax as much as possible. The very contrary, however, of these principles have been adopted on the advice of the City, with the result that we are borrowing as much as possible and taxing as little as possible. Never tell us that this course, which would be ruinous to the individual, is not ruinous to the State, or, again, that the adoption of the right and sensible principles would have been impossible. In the first place, we can affirm with the utmost confidence that exactly as a man who is ruined by extravagant borrowing finds himself in the hands of his creditors, who will not let him go until he has paid the uttermost farthing, the State of to-day will find itself to-morrow in the clutches of its present creditors, who will infallibly control its policy for a generation to come. And, in the second place, that the contrary policy was possible is clear from the approval with which its formulation would have been received by at least forty millions of our population. Are loans, do you think, popular with any other class than the moneylenders? If the Government, on the institution of compulsory military service, had instituted compulsory financial service as well, is it thought that the resistance would have been general? The popularity of a levy *en masse* upon our wealthy classes, would have been tremendous; and perhaps for that very reason our capitalist Press has feared to dangle it before the nation's eyes. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer is paid to be a public servant.

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The reflection may be introduced here that the taxation of capital and income would have saved us a good many of the failures and inconveniences of sumptuary legislation. Mobilisation means making mobile or liquid; and, applied to income, the mobilisation of income would imply the equitable levelling down of individual incomes to a point at which everybody might live while the aggregate surplus was taken by the State. There is no doubt that this proportionate reduction of spending power would have had the effect of compelling everybody to cut his standard of living by a new measure. In what actual proportions, as regards food, clothing, amusements, luxuries, etc., any man chose to spend his reduced income would have been a matter neither of concern nor, therefore, of legislation to the State, which, indeed, would have found itself relieved both of the necessity of borrowing and of the need to impose restrictions upon consumption. You cannot spend extravagantly if you have only moderate means; and the way to avoid national extravagance was to bring about the equitable moderation of the incomes of the whole population. Anxious, however, to tax as little as possible in order to borrow at interest as much as possible, the State, led by the banks, first began spending at a great rate itself and then allowed the nation at large to spend at a great rate with it, so

that in no long time the spectacle was provided of a State and a people both spending as they had never spent before, and at a time when the wealth and resources of the nation were being blown to pieces. Truly it would seem that wars are caused by prosperity, for prosperity in the war-fever is devoured as if it were the bacillus of the disease from which war will recover the patient! Truly, therefore, we may be wrong in urging that the better way, while the State is being compelled to spend, is to see that the nation does not spend at the same time. The folly of our Chancellors, the greediness of our bankers, and the thoughtlessness of our population, may all be providentially designed to destroy the accumulations of wealth which we have not known how better to use.

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Professor J. A. R. Marriott has expressed in the "Times" his surprise and pain that the "Times" should even have discussed the recent suggestion made by an "Exchange banker" for the "taxation of capital." The State, he says, can, of course, tax capital if it pleases. Constitutionally, indeed, all that is ours to our ox and our ass is at the disposal of the State without money and without price. But is the taxation of capital, he asks, equitable, is it financially advisable? It is difficult to realise that men may fall into a condition which Catholics call "invincible ignorance." It is a little less difficult to believe that an Oxford professor may be one of the shining examples of the company. But here, for once, is the plain evidence of both. Professor Marriott is actually questioning the equity of a levy upon wealth at a time when the equity of a levy upon life is being taken for granted; and he does not realise that he is saying something repugnant to morality as well as to sense. That a tax upon capital will not fall *equally* upon all classes is, of course, true: that a tax upon capital must fall upon one class and not upon another is equally true. And we can, therefore, understand that stupid people may be deluded by appearances into judging in consequence that such an unevenly distributed tax must needs be inequitable. The fact, however, is—and an Oxford professor ought to be aware of it—that equality and equity have only an accidental relation. The greatest of inequalities are compatible with equity; and, again, the equal treatment of things and persons may be grossly inequitable. Is it inequitable, for example, that only men under 40 should be compelled to risk their lives in military service—for assuredly the distribution of risk is not in this instance equal? We agree that it is nevertheless equitable, since the tax falls upon those best able (by the accident of age) to bear it. It can, therefore, be no less equitable that a tax on capital should fall—arbitrarily, if you will—upon capitalists who alone are able to bear it. The case, moreover, for the taxation of capital is far stronger than the case for the taxation of blood. All that a man has, it is said, he will give for his life—and properly, since he may hope to recover his money but never his life. But in this present war what is it, besides honour, that the nation is fighting for? Is it not the capital, actual and potential, of the wealthy classes of the nation? And would Germany, we ask, in the event of her victory, refrain from confiscating all the capital she could lay her hands on? Is not the taxation of capital proceeding in Belgium and Roumania? What, therefore, Professor Marriott is maintaining is that it is inequitable to require capital to defend capital at the risk of capital. Life he is quite willing to have conscripted and taxed for the defence of capital, but it would be inequitable to tax capital itself! We call this invincible ignorance, because we know of no cure for such a state of mind, compounded, as it is, of unconscious malice towards the poor, unconscious worship of the rich, and unconscious indifference to the well-being of society. And that an Oxford professor may fall into this condition, and remain in it without disgrace, we regard as our crime against culture.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

It may now be taken that Germany's latest attempt to secure a peace on terms advantageous to herself has failed. A preliminary Peace Conference is hardly probable; an armistice is very much less so. This is sufficient to account for the Kaiser's angry outburst reported in the week-end papers—the exhortation to his soldiers to "become as steel" and (not without significance, this) the reference to further sacrifices. As nobody knows better than the enemy, the preparations which the Allies are making now are for a protracted war; and this remark applies to financial matters as well as to military. The strain of a modern war is very severely felt by those engaged in it, and it is quite possible that Sir Douglas Haig's health may not stand the arrangements now being made for the spring offensive; but the offensive will be planned none the less. The French are ready, as are the Italians; and with the death of Rasputin the real disappearance of German influence in Russia may be said to have begun. We may, in consequence, expect to hear shortly that the Russian generals in the field are being adequately supported from the capital and the administrative centres, which has certainly not been the case since the war began. It is surely significant that the whole of Liberal Russia has wished these many years for the removal of those influences, which Rasputin may be said to have typified. Deprived of his personal support, his partisans can scarcely hope to carry on this tradition.

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Only in regard to one point does there appear to exist any doubt among the Allies, and that is Salonika. This expedition, while it is not likely to leave the bloody record of Gallipoli, has been in nearly all other respects singularly unfortunate. It was supported in these columns at the time it was planned on the understanding that it was to be effective. It was not effective; for it did not save Serbia; it did not act as a bait to Roumania; and it has been of little help except in so far as it kept many divisions of Germans, Turks, and Bulgars engaged in the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Dr. Dillon has told us in issue after issue of the "Fortnightly Review" that General Sarrail has never been properly supplied; that his force is composite; that he has only a small proportion of combatants in his army; that, in short, the expedition is either one which we ourselves approved of wholly, in which case we should have sent more men and supplies to the Balkans, or one of which we disapproved, in which case we should not even have given it the grudging consent we did give it. On the 3rd and 8th of this month the "Daily Mail," entirely reversing its policy, bitterly attacked this expedition to Salonika—attacked it, curiously enough, just after Lord Northcliffe had returned from a visit to the British front.

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I will not pretend to be ignorant of facts which the "Daily Mail," with its usual impetuosity, has made public. It is quite true, as certain responsible authorities—using the "Mail" as their journalistic megaphone—have told us, that the military elements generally are opposed to the Balkan adventure; that the forces at Salonika have done nothing very definite, and can do little. But this is not to be taken as an argument that transports should be sent to the Ægean to bring back the half-million or so who have landed at Salonika at intervals since October of 1915. Long before the "Mail" got its latest "tip" the Eastern and the Western schools, as they were called, had become formed and had entered into controversy. The military critics of the "Times" and the "Telegraph" have always been vehemently opposed to "sideshow" like Salonika and Mesopotamia on the ground that we could not afford to divide our forces, which were more effective in the

Western front than anywhere else. Mr. Garvin, on the other hand, supporting Mr. Lloyd George and M. Briand, urged an intensification of the Balkan expedition, on the ground that if we could pour another half million men into the Peninsula, there was every possibility of our being able to cut off the Bagdad line at Sofia or some other point, severing the connection between the Central Powers and their south-eastern allies, and thus rendering Turkey and Bulgaria harmless.

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Subject to the elimination of the Greek danger, this is the policy which I myself should have preferred to see followed; but I recognise that it presupposed a factor which very few took into consideration, namely, transport. Everybody knows how enormous have been the demands on our shipping, and how severely we have felt the effects of the sink-at-sight submarine campaign. All sober "Easterners," I fancy, must have recognised for some little time that henceforth only two things were possible with regard to the Salonika expedition—either the long Prespa-Struma line would have to be abandoned in favour of the entrenched camp at Salonika itself, the number of troops engaged being cut down by about half and no attempt being made to extend the area of operations outside the immediate Salonika area; or some arrangement would have to be made with Italy for getting reinforcements and supplies sent from England to the Balkan front by rail through France and Italy, and thence across the short stretch of water to Vallona. This would have more than justified the extension of the Italian line at Vallona to meet the French outposts west of Lake Prespa, as was done several weeks ago when the Italians began to co-operate with the French and the Serbs in the attack on Monastir. No doubt, expert railway commissioners have already examined the Italian railways to test the feasibility of this scheme, which would, of course, make the minimum demand on our transport service.

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I have heard many authorities urge the entire abandonment of the Balkan expedition on the ground that the men engaged in it could be used even now to better advantage elsewhere. This is a course which, given the present circumstances, I should not at all recommend. All the recent dispatches dealing with the situation in Greece, and, indeed, the actions of King Constantine and his government all along, have shown as clearly as possible that the rulers of Greece are only waiting for an opportunity of joining hands with Germany and Bulgaria; and the evacuation of Salonika would result in the greater part of the Greek coast being turned into a series of naval bases for German submarines. The route to Egypt would be gravely menaced, and also, of course, the route via the Suez Canal to places farther afield. This contingency could be provided for by, if necessary, turning Salonika into a vast military and naval base, leaving our warships in the Eastern Mediterranean as well off as they are now. There are other possibilities which the Council at Rome, with adequate information at their disposal, may have been able—who knows?—to discuss fully. There are, I believe, Italian military authorities who incline to an advance on Serbia and Bulgaria, not from the southern front in the Balkans, but rather through Albania, where we have the support of the influential Essad Pasha. So far as my knowledge of Albania goes, it is hardly the time of the year to suggest an immediate drive through Albania into Serbia, but the weather is none too good on the southern front in the Balkans, and the possibilities of a change of strategy remain. Here, again, transport is the chief factor to be reckoned with; and it is to be regretted that the trunk-line facilities through Italy can hardly be called abundant. On the practicability or otherwise of constructing light railways for this special purpose this is hardly the place or the time to speculate.

The Present Position and Power of the Press.

By H. Belloc.

XIV.

Such being the general characters of this movement in all countries, but particularly in France and England, where the evils of the Capitalist (or Official) Press were at their worst, let us next consider the disabilities under which this reaction—the Free Press—suffered.

I think these disabilities lie under five groups.

(1) In the first place, the free journals suffered from the difficulty which all reformers have, that they had to begin by going against the stream.

(2) In the second place they suffered from that character of particularism or "crankiness," which was a necessary result of their Propagandist character.

(3) In the third place—and this is most important—they suffered economically. They were unable to present to their readers all that their readers expected at the price.

(4) In the fourth place, for reasons that will be apparent in a moment, they suffered from lack of information.

To these four main disabilities the Free Papers in this country added a fifth peculiarly our own; they stood in peril from the arbitrary power of the Lawyers' Guild in this country.

Let us consider these five points. When we have examined them all we shall see against what forces, and in spite of what negative factors, the Free Press has established itself in intellectual Europe to-day.

XV.

I say that in the first place the Free Press being a reformer suffered from what all reformers suffer from, to wit, that in their origins they go against the stream.

The official or great or Capitalist Press round about them had already become a habit when the Free Papers appeared. Men had begun to think it a normal thing to read their daily paper; to believe what it told them to be facts, and even in a great measure to accept its opinion. A new voice criticising by implication, or directly blaming or ridiculing a habit so formed, was necessarily an unpopular voice with the mass of readers, or, if it was not unpopular, that was only because it was negligible.

This first disability, however, under which the Free Press suffered, and still suffers, would not naturally have been of long duration. The remaining four were far graver, for the mere inertia or counter current against which any reformer struggles is soon turned if the reformer (as was the case here) represented a real reaction, and was doing or saying things which the people, had they been as well informed as himself, would have agreed with. With the further disabilities of particularism, poverty, insufficiency, and legal restraint it was otherwise.

XVI.

The Particularism of the Free Papers was a grave and permanent weakness which still endures. Any instructed man to-day who really wants to find out what is going on reads the Free Press, but he is compelled, as I have said, to read the whole of it and piece together the sections if he wishes to discover his true whereabouts. Each particular organ gives him an individual impression, which is ex-centric, often highly ex-centric, to the general impression.

When I want to know, for instance, what is happening in France, I read the Jewish Socialist paper, the "Humanité"; the most violent French Socialist papers I can get, such as "La Guerre Sociale"; the Royalist "Action Française"; the anti-Semitic "Libre Parole," and so forth.

If I want to find out what is really happening with regard to Ireland, I not only buy the various small

Irish free papers (and they are numerous), but also THE NEW AGE and the "New Witness"—and so on, all through the questions that are of real and vital interest. But I only get my picture as a composite. The very same truth will be emphasised by different authorities for totally different motives. Take the Marconi case. The big official papers first boycotted it for months, and then told a pack of silly lies in support of the politicians. The Free Press gave one the truth—but its various organs gave the truth for very different reasons and with very different impressions. To some of the Irish papers it was a comic episode, "just what one expects of Westminster"; others dreaded it for fear it should lower the value of the Irish-owned Marconi shares. THE NEW AGE looked at it from quite another point of view than that of the "New Witness," and the specifically Socialist Free Press pointed it out as no more than an example of what happens under Capitalist Government.

A Mahommedan paper would no doubt have called it a result of the Nazarene religion, and a Thug paper an awful example of what happens when your authorities are not Thugs.

My point is, then, that the Free Press thus starting from so many different particular standpoints has not yet produced a general organ, by which I mean that it has not produced an organ such as would command the agreement of a very great body of men, should that very great body of men be instructed in the real way in which the modern world is governed.

Drumont is very useful for telling one a particular piece of truth, which the Official Press refuses to mention—such as the way in which the Rothschilds cheated the French Government over the death duties in Paris some years ago. Indeed, he alone ultimately compelled those wealthy men to disgorge, and it was a fine piece of work. But when he goes on to argue that cheating the revenue is a purely Jewish vice he will never get the mass of people to agree with him.

Charles Maurras is one of the most powerful writers living, and when he points out in the "Action Française" that the French Supreme Court did an illegal action at the close of the Dreyfus case, he is doing useful work, for he is telling the truth on a matter of vital public importance. But when he goes on to say that such a thing would not have occurred under a nominal Monarchy, he is talking nonsense. Anyone with the slightest experience of what the Courts of Law can be under a nominal Monarchy shrugs his shoulders and says that Maurras's action may have excellent results, but that his proposed remedy of setting up one of these modern Kingships in France in the place of the very corrupt Parliament is not convincing.

The "New Republic" in New York vigorously defends Brandeis because Brandeis is a Jew, and the "New Republic" (which I read regularly, and which is invaluable as an independent instructor on American public affairs) is Jewish in tone. The defence of Brandeis interests me and instructs me. But when the "New Republic" prints pacifist propaganda by Brailsford, or applauds Lane under the alias of "Norman Angell," it is—in my view—eccentric and even contemptible. "New Ireland" helps me to understand the quarrel with the Irish Parliamentary party—but I must, and do, read the "Freeman" as well.

In a word, the Free Press all over the world, so far as I can read it, suffers from this note of particularity, and, therefore, of isolation and strain. It is not of general appeal.

In connection with this disability you get the fact that the Free Press has come to depend upon individuals, and thus fails to be as yet an institution. It is difficult to see how any of the papers I have named would long survive a loss of their present editorship. There might possibly be one successor; there certainly would not be two; and the result is that the effect of these organs is sporadic and irregular.

In the same connection you have the disability of a restricted audience.

There are some men (and I count myself one) who will read anything, however much they differ from its tone and standpoint, in order to obtain more knowledge. I am not sure that it is a healthy habit. At any rate, it is an unusual one. Most men will only read that which, while informing them, takes for granted a philosophy more or less sympathetic with their own. The Free Press, therefore, so long as it springs from many and varied minorities, not only suffers everywhere from an audience restricted in the case of each organ, but from preaching to the converted. It does get hold of a certain outside public which increases slowly, but it captures no great area of public attention at any one time.

XVII.

The third group of disabilities, as I have said, attaches to the economic weakness of the Free Press. It is rigorously boycotted by the great advertisers, partly, perhaps, because its small circulation renders them contemptuous (because nearly all of them are of the true wooden-headed "business" type that go in herds and never see for themselves where their goods will find the best market); but much more from frank enmity against the existence of any Free Press at all.

Stupidity, for instance, would account for the great advertisers not advertising articles of luxury in a paper with only a three thousand a week circulation, even if that paper were read from cover to cover by all the rich people in England; but it would not account for absence in the Free Press alone of advertisements appearing in every other kind of paper, and in many organs of far smaller circulation still.

The boycott is deliberate, and is persistently maintained. The effect is that the Free Press cannot give in space and quality of paper, excellence of distribution, and the rest, what the Official Press can give, for it lacks advertisement subsidy. This is a very grave economic handicap indeed.

In part the Free Press is indirectly supported by a subsidy from its own writers. Men whose writing commands high payment will contribute to the Free Press sometimes for small fees, usually for nothing; but, at any rate, always well below their market prices. But contribution of that kind is always precarious, and, if I may use the word, jerky. Meanwhile, it does not fill a paper. It is true that the level of writing in the Free Press is very much higher than in the Official Press. To compare the Notes in THE NEW AGE, for instance, with the Notes in the "Spectator" is to discern a contrast like that between one's chosen conversation with equals, and one's forced conversation with commercial travellers in a railway carriage.

The occasional articles in the Free Press have the same mark of high value, but it is not regular: and, meanwhile, hardly one of the Free Papers pays its way.

The difficulty of distribution, which I have mentioned, comes under the same heading, and is another grave handicap.

If a man finds a difficulty in getting some paper to which he is not a regular subscriber, but which he desires to purchase more or less regularly, it drops out of his habits. I myself, who am an assiduous reader of all such matter, have lost touch sometimes with one Free Paper or another for months, on account of a couple of weeks' difficulty in getting my copy. I believe this impediment of habit to apply to most of the Free Papers.

Fourthly, but also partly economic, there is the difficulty the Free Press suffers from of imperfect information. It will print truths which the Great Papers studiously conceal, but daily and widespread information on general matters it has great difficulty in obtaining.

Information is obtained either at great expense

through private agents or through official channels. The Official Press makes and unmakes the politicians. Therefore, the politician is careful to keep it informed of truths that are valuable to him, as well as to make it the organ of falsehoods equally valuable. Most of the official papers, for instance, were informed of the Indian Silver scandal by the culprits themselves in a fashion which prevented attack. Those who desired to attack groped in the dark. For we must remember that the professional politicians all stand in together when a financial swindle is being carried out. There is no "opposition" in these things. Since it is the very business of the Free Press to expose the falsehood or inanity of the Official Capitalist Press, one may truly say that a great part of the energies of the Free Press is wasted in this "groping in the dark" to which it is condemned. At the same time, the Economic difficulty prevents the Free Press from paying for information difficult to be obtained, and under these twin disabilities it remains heavily handicapped.

(To be continued.)

After the War.

[Written as a preface to a volume of essays shortly to be published by Mr. Douglas Pepler under the title of "Old Worlds for New."]

It needs little insight into social and political questions to realise that the war marks the close of an era in our civilisation, and that the task of social reconstruction can no longer be delayed. After the war, when the artificial and unnatural prosperity which we now enjoy is over, all the glaring contradictions of our civilisation will stand out before us, naked in all their ugliness, and woe betide us if in that supreme crisis the mind of the nation is still unprepared. For no despot alone, however great, can save society. The success of any measures which he might initiate for the public good are conditioned and limited in every direction by the general level of thought and intelligence of the community.

Recognising, then, the extreme gravity of the situation, and the importance of meeting the impending crisis with well ascertained and clearly defined principles, I am seeking to secure a wider recognition for certain fundamental principles of social organisation, which in our day have fallen into desuetude. Their revival, I am assured, must precede the task of social reconstruction. The experience of the war has not shaken but has confirmed my belief in their truth; indeed, the war itself I cannot but regard as evidence in support of them—it is the inevitable catastrophic ending of a society which has chosen to deny the laws of its own being.

I have said that the experience of the war has not shaken but confirmed my belief in the old principles of social organisation. Considering that these principles are antipathetic to those of Collectivism, and that the State is to be seen everywhere increasing its hold—that railways, shipping, endless factories and coalfields have come under Government control, and that it is more than probable that circumstances after the war will increasingly compel the State to interfere in the management of industry, it may not unreasonably be asked what grounds I have for such confidence. To this I answer that, apart from the coalfields, which may eventually be nationalised (and to State ownership of natural monopolies I have no objection) it will be seen as the present scheme of things unfolds that this State activity does not tend towards the collectivisation of industry, but towards a revival of the Guilds. That confusion should exist on this point is due to the fact that all State action in relation to industry has quite unreasonably come to be regarded as Collectivist. Such, however, is far from being the case. Whether Governmental interference with industry is to be regarded as

Collectivist or not, all depends upon the nature of the interference itself. If its aim be to take the direction of industry out of private hands and to place it in the hands of officials, then it is Collectivist; but if, on the contrary, its aim be to protect the public or the workers against capitalist abuses, then the State is merely resuming the functions which, in the Middle Ages, were performed by the Guilds, and which, in the future, will be performed by the revived Guilds. Once embarked upon a policy of regulating prices the State will, as the system extends, find itself compelled to seek the re-creation of the Guilds in order to give practical effect to its intentions.

Fixed prices, then, will bring back the Guilds. This is a certainty, for in this connection history is repeating itself. It was to guard society against the evils of an unregulated currency that the Guilds were instituted in the past. The Guild legislators realised that a currency, when unregulated, lent itself to manipulation for profit, and being determined to restrict currency to its legitimate use as a medium of exchange, they sought a remedy in fixed prices. Once grasp the economic necessity of fixed prices, and the whole range of Guild regulations becomes intelligible. In order to fix prices, it becomes necessary to maintain a standard of quality. As a standard of quality cannot be defined finally in the terms of laws, it is necessary, in order to uphold a standard, to place authority in the hands of craft masters—a consensus of opinion among whom constitutes the final court of appeal. In order to ensure a supply of masters, it is necessary to train apprentices, to regulate the size of the workshop, hours of labour, the volume of production, and so forth. The first link in this chain of economic necessity has already been forced, the rest is only a matter of time.

The force which is driving things in this direction is, at the moment, rising prices. After the war other forces will make themselves felt. The tendency to-day towards servile conditions of labour has its counterpart in the growth of industrial unrest, and it needs but the unemployed problem which will follow the war to open wide the flood gates of anarchy and revolution. Confronted with it, our statesmen will be helpless, for they lack any comprehension of the problem of our society, as a whole. Politicians have for so long been concerned with secondary things in society, while discussions of primary and fundamental principles are at such a discount, that they are without the mental equipment which a great crisis demands. Evidence of their lack of grip on reality is forthcoming on every hand. Though they realise that the demobilisation of the forces and the closing down of the munition factories will bring upon us an unemployed problem of an unprecedented scale; and though they are proposing certain measures for coping with it, they yet remain for the most part unconscious of the real peril that confronts them, consoling themselves with the comforting thought that, bad as things are likely to be, the dislocation of industry will only be temporary, and that the unemployed problem will tend to disappear before the anticipated revival of trade.

That there are real grounds for any such optimism is to be doubted. That trade will not revive after war may, perhaps, be difficult to prove, but there are many reasons for believing that such will probably be the case. It would appear that the limits of industrial expansion (a further increase of which is essential to a revival of trade, if industry is to remain on its present basis) was reached before the war; and that the war itself was the direct consequence of the economic impasse which had been created. Professor Hauser* tells us in this connection that in Germany the ratio of productivity, due to never-slackening energy, technique and scientific development, was before the war far out-

stripping the ratio of demand. Production was no longer controlled by demand, but by plant. What the Americans call overhead expenses had increased to such an enormous extent that no furnace could be damped down and no machine stopped; for the overhead expenses would then eat up the profits, and the whole industrial organisation come crashing down, bringing with it national bankruptcy. To avert this impending catastrophe, Germany chose to resort to war. We miss the lesson which this war should teach us, if we think that their watchword, "World power or downfall," was merely the product of a diseased imagination. The truth is, it had become for them an economic necessity. It was a desperate effort to escape from the consequences of unregulated machine production.

I insist upon a frank recognition of this fact, for our natural and justifiable disgust at the arrogance of Prussian militarism appears to have entirely blinded us to the ugly economic facts which lay behind the war. The anti-climax in which unregulated production in Germany had ended would, apart from the war, not only before long have overtaken us, but the whole of Western civilisation. For Industrialism was everywhere travelling along the same road, and I do not exaggerate when I say that so far as our welfare and happiness is concerned it is a matter of life and death with us that this fact should be publicly recognised. If discussion to-day is to be taken as any indication of the policy which we are to pursue after the war we appear to be heading blindfold to disaster. Nowhere do I see any recognition of the ugly fact that the industrial system has reached its limit of expansion. On the contrary, our policy for after the war a cynic might say is to make bad worse—to reproduce, in fact, in an intensified form, the very conditions which have brought the war about.

The economic isolation of Germany, on which our faith for the future is based, is to be recommended just to the extent that it is in the interests of every country to be as self-contained as possible. But such a policy fails to touch the central issue of over-production, which will be staring us in the face after the war. It is admitted that we shall have to face a decreased purchasing power among all the belligerent nations. This of itself is sufficient to precipitate catastrophe, when we remember that our industries can only be made to pay on the assumption that we can dispose of our goods in ever increasing quantities. But where shall we be if the advance guard of industrialism get their own way with their policy of still further extending the volume of production by increased specialisation? Clearly, it can only make matters worse. Such a policy, instead of helping us to solve our unemployed problem, can only intensify it. For the organisation of industry on a basis of "Scientific Management" will not increase but decrease the demand for labour.* The old Manchester School doctrine, that a reduction of prices (at which this policy aims) will be followed by an increase of demand, will not hold good after the war, because it presupposes, among other things, that the major part of the nation is already in employment.

Such, then, is the dilemma which will confront us, and I should imagine that the only conclusion which any rational person would come to would be that, if going forward can only lead us to further disasters, the one thing to do is to make up our minds to go back. How long it will take us to swallow our pride and come to that decision I do not know; but come to it finally we must, for there is no alternative. What I suspect, however, is that instead of fearlessly facing the issue in a bold and constructive way, such as a frank recog-

* In the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission Mr. and Mrs. Webb say, "There is no denying that nowadays machinery is displacing labour." If this was true before the war, how much more so will it be after it quite apart from "Scientific Management"?

* "Germany's Commercial Grip of the World." By Professor Hauser.

nition of the fact that the days of unregulated production are over might beget, we shall stupidly pursue a dual policy of seeking on the one hand by labour saving machinery and "scientific management" to reduce the wage bill, and, on the other, to deal with the consequent unemployment by means of State subsidies and private philanthropy. The result will be that we shall get nowhere in particular, or, what is more than probable, that we shall embark on new military enterprises in a vain endeavour to restore to society some of the prosperity which accompanies the war to-day.

I said that, if further disasters are to be averted, we shall have to make up our minds to go back. But, comes the question, how? The answer is simplicity itself—by the reversal of our economic policy. To the popular mind such a reversal connotes nothing more than the abandonment of the principles of Free Trade in favour of Protection, which, as I have already explained, has my support. But the issue of Free Trade and Protection is not the central issue. Like all the issues in current politics, it is on the circumference of things. It does not lie at the centre. Free Trade or Protection will not of itself effect a fundamental change. The possessors of surplus wealth will still continue investing for further increase on the assumption not only that their private fortunes will be thereby enlarged, but that such investment gives employment. One hundred and fifty years ago when this doctrine was first enunciated there was perhaps something in it. But it certainly is not true to-day, for the investment of surplus wealth for further increase in most cases has the very opposite effect. It decreases employment, and it decreases it because the aim of most new business enterprises to-day is to supplant the man by the machine. It does not to-day increase the national wealth but the overhead expenses of industry, which, by making our industrial system more and more top-heavy, renders it still more unstable.

Viewed in this light, the reversal of our economic policy means that, instead of concentrating our energies on the increase of supply, while leaving demand to take care of itself, we should aim at maintaining a balance between demand and supply, and the way to adjust this balance to-day is to advise people not to re-invest surplus wealth, but to spend it in the way it was the custom to spend it before the introduction of machinery and the limited liability company made possible constant reinvestment. To advise rich people to use their money in this way will doubtless appear to many to be a counsel of perfection, which will not be listened to. But I am no pessimist in the matter. In the first place, because I believe a great proportion of the rich to-day re-invest their money instead of spending it, not from any particular motive of gain, but because it is the custom; and in the next, because the remainder will find after the war that the only way to secure themselves against personal violence is to use their money for the direct purpose of giving employment. In the past, surplus wealth was spent, among other things, upon the crafts and architecture. For building was never expected to pay. In which connection it may be interesting to quote the words of Pericles, who, in answer to some who complained that Athens was over-adorned like a woman wearing too many jewels, replied that "Surplus wealth was best spent upon such works as would bring eternal glory to the city, and, at the same time, employ her artificers." I might add that many of the Greek Temples were built to find a solution to their unemployed problems.

While at one end of the industrial scale our policy should be to get money spent freely on architecture and the crafts, using architecture in the broadest sense as including all good building, at the other end agriculture should be revived. I feel little disposition to enlarge upon this issue, because I feel that it is going to be done, though, perhaps, from a different motive. Suffice it, however, to say that it is vital for the solution of our

problems that the agricultural worker should be paid a wage equivalent to that of the industrial worker. Let us break for ever with the commercial tradition that useful work should be badly paid, for there is no more fruitful source of corruption in our midst than the knowledge that it is only by humbug and pretence that a man can escape from poverty. A. J. PENTY.

Has Ireland an Immortal Soul?

It is somewhat disconcerting to find a reasoned exposition of the unpardonable English heresy in the pages of THE NEW AGE—the heresy that subject races have a material, but no spiritual existence. Yet, in discussing the history of "Ireland's Literary Renaissance," this is the assumption upon which "R. H. C." proceeds to demolish the claims of Anglo-Irish literature. He will not have it that Ireland has anything to express which is clearly and definitely her own, but insists that the voice is England's voice, though the hands are the hands of Ireland. What is this after all, but the application to literature of the methods of political discussion in use between the two countries? The assertion of Irishmen, on the one side, that they are not English, the denial by Englishmen, on the other, that Irish nationality has a real existence. The habit of regarding Irish problems as localised English politics is no different from "R.H.C.'s" attitude, revealed in his allusion to "localised English literature," as a fair description of the literary life of Ireland.

Indeed, the closer one studies "R. H. C.'s" analysis of the subject the more remarkable the parallel appears. He argues against the separate existence of Anglo-Irish by analogy with English dialect, just as the politicians consider Ireland in the light of an English province. In both cases the essential factor is overlooked, namely, the nationality as distinct from the locality of the people concerned. Dorsetshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire may certainly possess writers whose dialect of English can best be appreciated by those to whom it is native, but, however unintelligible to strangers, these writers are none the less Englishmen, expressing the spirit of their race. They are not any less so than Houston Chamberlain, who has placed the most perfect equipment of English Imperialism at the disposal of a foreign country in a foreign language. There are Englishmen in Ireland who speak only Gaelic, and were never more typical of their race than in this obstinate negation of bilingualism. "R. H. C." must surely have observed that no Irishman is so preposterously Irish as he who would pass for an Englishman.

Language, in fine, is not the test of nationality, for otherwise, we should hear of Whitman as an English poet, of Amiel as a French thinker, of Verhaeren as a poet of France. But the French critics, in spite of—or, rather, because of—the intellectual world-power of their language are far from emulating "R. H. C." in his literary imperialism. To them a Swiss Protestant, like Amiel, is a phenomenon which they are only too pleased to exclude from the characteristic manifestations of the French spirit and tradition. Similarly, the Belgian writers are rarely admitted to the ranks of French literature, unless, or until, they have divested themselves of whatever racial imprint marks them off from the genuine heirs to French culture. Pierre Lasserre, the critic who has shown himself in recent years the most capable interpreter of the classical tradi-

tion since Brunetière, even denies the position of Rousseau in the literary history of France. He rightly recognises him as a purely Swiss product, whose influence has been diametrically opposed to the natural evolution of the French mind. In Ireland we are accustomed to seeing our eighteenth and early nineteenth century authors annexed, in exactly the contrary manner, by the literary imperialists.

"R. H. C." surpasses even such voracious annexationists, for he will sweep into a capacious net the very men who have definitely removed from Anglo-Irish the stigma of Anglicisation, which, perhaps, lends colour to the claim of England to Swift, Congreve, and Sheridan. He is enabled to do this by the ingenious application of the formula "whatever is written in English is to be and may fairly be judged by the standards of English." Consequently, it must be either "English literature pure and simple with a special note," or "dialect literature—literature, that is, in the idiom of a particular locality." Thus, the irritating spirit of nationality is exorcised by the magic word "note," while its more obvious manifestations are concealed by the term "dialect." We are left to imagine some Roman critic dismissing "Don Quixote," or the "Divine Comedy" as Latin literature in the idiom of Spain or Italy, if not claiming it as Latin literature pure and simple with a special note.

Clearly, there is a sense in which such a claim might fairly be put forward, but it is hardly the sense in which "R. H. C." is writing, for insistence upon it would eventually lead us to the conclusion that no modern literature exists. Much as Dante may consciously or unconsciously derive from Virgil, he is the expression of something more—or less—than Rome, he speaks for another people. Cervantes is as essentially and as uniquely Spanish as if Latin had never done anything beyond implanting the seed from which the Spanish dialect of Latin was to spring. Is it merely a "special note" that distinguishes these writers from their classical predecessors? Once we admit "R. H. C.'s" theory of notes and dialects it is a little difficult to see why it should not be used to explain the literary existence of contemporary Latin Europe. All that is necessary is a determination to ignore the content of literature, except in so far as permitted by the term "note," and to emphasise the form of literature, with reference to philological research.

It may well be that "Ireland's Literary Renaissance" fails to bring out the point which has been so skilfully ignored in criticism, the presence in Irish literature of racial qualities independent of the idiom in which they are expressed. Standish O'Grady's style "belongs to English classical literature," as "R. H. C." affirms, but without the italics which make the position of O'Grady in the Irish Renaissance intelligible. Except in so far as any fine writing must stimulate young men sensitive to literature, his style, as style, has had little effect upon the development of the movement to which he gave so powerful an impulse. The influence of O'Grady was imaginative, and in this it was aided by the quality of the old literature which he revealed to minds as naturally prepared to be captured as his own. There was a correspondence of spirit which created and inspired literature by an appeal to already existing faculties of intuition and sympathy. In Ireland we believe this phenomenon to transcend the limitations of dialect or local tradition. We regard this response as an intimation of literary immortality.

There is, of course, an element in Anglo-Irish literature which presents superficial analogies with the dialect literature of England, the idiom of Gaelic-speaking Ireland. At worst, Gaelicised English has superior claims to the patois of rural England, in that it is not the corruption of English by the local usage of English people without literary education, but is an

amalgam of English at its finest flowering with the idioms of an ancient and highly cultivated language, remarkable as a subtle and diversified literary medium. If we must regard Anglo-Irish idiom as a dialect, or branch of English, then it obviously must rank as the finest English of our time, for it has not only preserved the Elizabethan speech, but has reinforced it by Gaelic, a tongue whose rich colour provides a peculiarly appropriate combination. But only our most provincial imitators of England, emulating her thirst for annexation in characteristic fashion, wish to arrogate to Ireland the distinction of being the country where the most beautiful English is spoken. Most of us are content to regard this idiom as a tangible, if minor, proof of the living presence of our literary tradition. If "R. H. C." insists upon calling our speech dialect, we can only refer optimistically to the national literatures of Europe which began as dialects, but did not remain so when the racial spirit breathed upon them.

The pessimism which prompts the fear that the Irish Renaissance will "dwindle to a literary weed," though allegedly based upon the absence of honest criticism in Ireland, is traceable to a more profound, and, perhaps, more serious reason. THE NEW AGE has always demanded criticism as the condition precedent of progress in every department of life, and has set such an example that it has a following, in that section of Ireland which reads, out of all proportion to the relative standards of education in England and in the smaller country. Whereas, among a people extraordinarily hostile to intellectual honesty, its fight for existence has been as strenuous in its way as Ireland's. Nor is there any field of criticism which has been more bitterly resented than the literary, so that it is hardly necessary to remind "R. H. C." that, for once, he has forgotten to differentiate between THE NEW AGE and . . . the rest. He can hardly ask us, whether his English or his Irish readers, to ignore the presence of coteries, and the admiration of mutual friends in London, while denouncing the same conditions in Dublin. The size of London is no guarantee of disinterested criticism. It is a pleasant metropolitan delusion that the literary whole is greater than the parts of which it is composed. "R. H. C." comes forward too late and too conveniently as one of the deluded: he knows about it all, he knows—and so do we in Ireland.

The truth is his pessimistic forecast arises from his inability, or difficulty, in seizing the vital issue of the controversy. He makes no allowance for the factor of nationality: in fact, he denies it, and is consequently unable to see further than the limitations he has set to the subject permit. If he would admit that the Literary Renaissance springs from deep sources, and is not a question of idioms and leprechauns, he might interpret the auspices more favourably. There is undeniably a motive of thought and emotion running through Celtic literature which sets it apart from the literatures of other races, and in the writers of the Renaissance this motive is discernible. They are linked thereby to their Gaelic forerunners, and find themselves caught up in a tradition which confers a sense of national consciousness, utterly different from the regionalism of dialect literature. Milton's materialistic paradise could only have been visioned by one of his race, and no Irishman of Shakespeare's genius could have imagined so much without ever glimpsing heaven. A. E. has defined the characteristic mark of the Celt as an aboriginal conviction of divinity, and Celtic literature is informed with this conviction. Whenever this element, so exotic to the English temperament, appears in English literature we find that it has been borrowed, as in the Arthurian legends, from foreign sources. It is the restoration of the fundamental quality of Celtic inspiration, imagination and thought to literature which gives Irishmen faith in their literary renaissance.

ERNEST A. BOYD.

Germany and Woodrow Wilson.

I.

THE European state of mind regarding President Wilson's note seems one of bewilderment—of bewilderment mingled with tepid hope. The note has met with almost universal criticism, but the criticism is tentative, weak and without point. Journalists and statesmen feel compelled to speak, but what to say appears beyond their powers of comprehension. They simply do not know what the American President means, and it would be better if they would frankly say so. And not one of the Allied Powers knows the precise attitude of another; nor does one of the Central Powers foresee exactly how the note will be received by another member of its group. The whole discussion is extraordinarily tame and ineffectual. Curiously enough, it is England that has most completely misconstrued the purpose of the note, while it is Germany that now begins to get the first glimpses of its meaning. And the glimpses are tremendously disturbing to Germany's masters.

Probably this is precisely what Mr. Wilson expected. For his note was written for Germany alone, and it is only through diplomatic necessity that he addressed it to the belligerents in common. It is this diplomatic necessity that has masked the meaning of the note in such hard and unemotional impartiality, and that has brought such stupefaction and mental helplessness to Europe.

I can see in President Wilson's note nothing else than an ultimatum to Germany; nor do I believe President Wilson himself sees in it anything else than this. It is an ultimatum that may mean either peace or war; but it is no less an ultimatum. And the first meaning of the note is indeed war rather than peace. For Mr. Wilson knows that, if the war continues, America cannot much longer remain apart. The world cannot continue in flames, and so big a house as the United States escape the conflagration. In one way or another, America must essay to bring the conflict to a conclusion—first deciding upon which side the hope and progress of democracy lie, and then aligning herself with that side. It is to this end that each of the two groups of the belligerents is asked to state precisely what it is fighting for, and what terms of peace will satisfy it; for only so may the American States intelligently decide with which group to throw their probably conclusive resources.

It is just at this point that the issue of America is substantially with Germany alone. The terms of the Allies are well enough known, so far as the political geography of Europe is concerned; they have been repeatedly and frankly stated. England demands absolutely nothing in Europe for herself; but she demands for Belgium complete restoration and restitution, and the same for France, with the return of Alsace-Lorraine in addition. She demands also the restoration and reunion of the Serbian peoples in a greater Serbian Kingdom, and then the complete freedom of each European people to choose its own national affiliations and public conditions. The demands of France are identical with those of England. Italy demands for herself that part of the Italian nation which is still under the dominion of Austria, and for the rest of Europe her demands are also identical with those of England and France. The problem of Russia and Constantinople

is much more complicated, and has been carefully avoided; but it would be best that the Allies frankly state their agreement with Russia. For Americans will be the last to be disturbed by the cession of Constantinople to Russia. No country is so desirous as America of ridding both Europe and Asia Minor of Turkish dominion. Probably America would ask for an independent Armenian Kingdom, as she has always had a special interest in the Armenian people.

Germany, on the other hand, has not the slightest intention of stating her terms, now or at any time. She has only the intention of keeping her hold upon Middle Europe and the road to Bagdad, knowing that, if she succeeds in this, the rest of Europe will ultimately come into her possession. Her initiation of the question of peace had no other motive than the prolongation of her power to keep and to conquer. If she can compel or seduce the Allies to a conference, she will propose terms befitting a conqueror, even though foreknowing their rejection. During the continuance of such a conference, perhaps not less than a year, Germany would renew her resources, while France and Russia would be but the more depleted. The end of the discussions would be the gain by trickery and treachery of much of that for which Germany began the war. That President Wilson foresaw the German evasion or rejection of his invitation I do not for a moment doubt. And, if Germany persists in her present position, the entrance of America upon the war in fellowship with the Allies is certain.

Now this is the sharp and sure point of President Wilson's note, as Berlin begins to see. He has undertaken to compel Germany to show her hand, in order that, in case of refusal, the American people will support him in the course he will be compelled to take. Either Germany must place all her terms upon the table, and there show they are such as to satisfy the conscience of the world, or she must add America to the number of her enemies. And it is thus that the first point of President Wilson's note is not peace, but war.

II.

But the American note has also a second and more amazing import—an import of infinite consequences, whether it be accepted or rejected; and that is, not the psychical preparation of the great Republic for war, but the unparalleled opportunity afforded to Germany to make an end of war forever, and to give a true and upbuilding peace to humanity. Never, in the whole history of man, has a nation had so supreme and divine a chance as that presented to Germany's rulers by our President. Let Germany unevasively and specifically, without qualification or concealment, give a new and affirmative answer to Mr. Wilson's invitation. Let her place upon the table such terms and conditions of peace as shall win the sympathy and applause of mankind. Let her volunteer the complete restoration of Belgium and of France, of the Balkan States as well, with compensation for all that these invaded countries have suffered. Let her propose the full and true rehabilitation of Poland, including the part attached to Prussia. Let her demand that the Dardanelles be considered an integral part of the Mediterranean Sea, neutral and open equally to all nations. Let her ask that Constantinople be set apart as the seat of an International Tribunal—the consecrated capitol of a renascent and resolute Christendom. Let her, of her own choice, return Alsace-Lorraine to France, Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark, set Bohemia free, and then invite all German peoples to unite in fraternal confederation, in one fellowship of freedom and progress. Let her—if I may redeem a term from the gambler—now call the American President's divine bluff: let her stake her existence and destiny upon one vast and valiant throw of faith, one inclusive and

irrevocable renunciation, one challenging and creative affirmation of the fundamental and inviolable brotherhood of man. Let her gather up all her capacity for trickery and intrigue into this one celestial and redeeming trick upon the human race.

By thus becoming as a nation that is born in a day—by such an instant ascent into a true national being—by this sudden realisation of a new kind of national integrity—Germany may even now and at once step into the spiritual leadership of the world, and bring in the yearned-for millennium of the Apocalypse. Heaven never offered to mortal chief, never thrust upon historic nation, such immortal doors as now open before Kaiser William and his people. He may now make himself, if he have the vision and the daring, the most tremendous and anointed ruler of history; he may make Germany the messianic nation of the world, the first-born of the true and universal super-humanity.

Are there no eyes in Germany envisioned to see, are there no souls enstatured to seize, the prodigious and unprecedented opportunity which the note of Woodrow Wilson presents?

GEO. D. HERRON.

An Industrial Symposium.

Conducted by Huntly Carter.

WITH a view to pooling the practical wisdom of the nation upon the main problems of the after-war period, THE NEW AGE is submitting the two following questions to representative public men and women:—

- (1) What in your opinion will be the industrial situation after the war as regards (a) Labour, (b) Capital, (c) the Nation as a single commercial entity?
- (2) What in your view is the best policy to be pursued by (a) Labour, (b) Capital, (c) the State?

(32) MR. G. D. H. COLE.

Along what lines ought the reconstruction of industry after the war to proceed? That, I take it, is the gist of the three questions which THE NEW AGE is asking of its contributors; and I feel that I can best answer those questions by attempting a general answer to my own. That there must be some reconstruction of industry we are all agreed; upon the lines along which reconstruction ought to proceed there is the greatest divergence of opinion. Perhaps we can best approach the criticism of the rival principles of reconstruction by a survey of the tendencies that are operating during the war period. I shall begin, then, with a dogmatic summary of these tendencies as they appear to me.

I. During the war, LABOUR has received from the State a fuller recognition than ever before. This recognition has taken both agreeable and disagreeable forms. Labour has been consulted more than ever before, or, at least, Labour leaders have been consulted. Labour, or, again, the Labour leader, has been called upon to assume a far greater degree of communal responsibility, and, at least in appearance, of communal power. On the other hand, Labour—and here I mean the actual manual workers—has been compelled to submit to rigorous limitation of its freedom of action, and to a far greater measure of State control than seemed possible before the war. Spiritually, Labour has both gained and lost: it has gained by the recognition of its influence and right to power; and it has lost by the inability to exercise that influence and right to power effectively. Materially, Labour has once more gained and lost: it has gained because, on the whole, its earning power has increased, and because it will be difficult for wages to fall again to the pre-war level; and it has lost because the strength of Trade Unionism has been seriously impaired by the concessions that have been made.

II. CAPITAL, like Labour, has received from the State a fuller recognition than ever before. From the beginning of the war, the control of business men over Government has increased, until now capitalist in-

terests have, to all intents and purposes, a Government of their own. Profits, it is true, have been limited both under the Munitions Act and under the Excess Profits Tax; but in both cases only excess profits have been touched. Moreover, in return for these limitations, the capitalist has received both the protection of the State in his business and additional power conferred by the State over the workers he employs. Capitalism has become the State's accredited industrial agent, and State control has only served to strengthen the capitalist's control over industry. Again, Capital has found during the war ample scope for industrial experiments impossible in times of peace; and the result of these experiments has been to make Capital both more efficient and stronger.

III. The STATE has intervened in industrial questions more than ever before. It has organised production, and directed the productive energies of the nation, on an unprecedented scale, and it is apparently about to embark on still larger industrial enterprises. Throughout, however, the action of the State has taken such forms as to leave private capitalism not only the ownership but also the management of industry. The Munitions Department, co-ordinating the labour of millions of workers and thousands of establishments, itself directly employs comparatively few persons. Only in the sphere of the merchant, as buyer and seller mainly of raw materials, has the State, chiefly through the War Office Contracts Department, directly assumed functions previously belonging to the capitalist. It has "controlled" the railways; but the companies still manage them. It is "controlling" the mines; but the mine-owners are to "carry on as usual." In short, its control over capitalism has not taken the form of expropriation, and has not involved any drastic change in the management of industry. Again, in relation to Labour, the State has assumed large new coercive powers, not only under the Munitions Act, but also under the Military Service Acts and the Defence of the Realm Act, and further drastic action in this connection seems likely. But much of this extended power over Labour is exercised by the State, not directly, but in the new feudal form initiated in the Insurance Act, indirectly through the employer.

IV. From the point of view of SOCIETY, we may sum up the industrial effects of the war as these. Private Capitalism, as we knew it before the war, has suffered a shrewd blow from which it can hardly recover; but it has been replaced by none of the alternative systems which, before the war, seemed its only serious rivals. Collectivism, or the direct control of industry by the State; Syndicalism, or the control of industry by the Trade Unions; and National Guilds, or joint control of industry by the Guilds and the State, are as far off as ever, if not farther off than ever. Instead, we have, at any rate, the beginnings of a new industrial system, properly to be called State Capitalism, under which private capitalism and profiteering continue with the moral and physical support of the State.

So far, we have been merely diagnosing the existing disease. Now we must turn to the future. Here, again, it is most convenient to divide our subject-matter into two main parts—dangers and possible remedies.

A. First among the DANGERS for the period after the war is the possibility that State Capitalism may be permanent, or as permanent as a stage in the industrial evolution of Society can be. This danger is the more disturbing because of the possibility that Labour may be brought, or, at least, may seem, to acquiesce in the new system. The participation of Labour in the present State Capitalist Government may be but a political foretaste of a situation that will be reproduced in the industrial sphere. As Mr. Lloyd George offered Labour a junior partnership in politics, the capitalists, and the capitalist State on their behalf, may offer Labour a junior partnership in industry. If such a partnership is accepted, goodbye for awhile to our hopes of ending capitalism and the wage system. Labour may be offered not only a form of junior partnership in control, but also higher wages, shorter hours, and better material conditions; and it may even, if the capitalists are wise enough, be offered these things in return for little apparent concession on the Labour side. It will be enough to secure the triumph of Capital if, by one means or another, Labour can be drawn into the capitalist system, and converted

into an upholder of that which it has hitherto more or less consciously menaced. An industrial truce, probably guaranteed by the State; new and subtle schemes of profit-sharing which offer to share profits with the Trade Union instead of the individual; bogus schemes of workshop control which lay upon the Unions the responsibility for keeping their members in order—these are the most dangerous, because the most specious, proposals which may come from the capitalist side as parts of a general scheme of reconstruction, including, also, higher wages and shorter hours of labour. Will Labour, which has never been strong in the possession of a constructive ideal of its own, have the foresight and the moral force to resist these blandishments? We cannot, after our experience of Labour during the war, venture to give an optimistic reply. Yet these are the offers Capitalism will make, if it has the wisdom of the serpent. Only the folly of Capitalism, or a new-found wisdom in the ranks of Labour, it seems, can save us from the regime of State Capitalism after the war.

B. Yet we must not be pessimists, if we can see that there are REMEDIES to hand, if Labour can only be persuaded to adopt them. State Capitalism steals the thunder of Collectivists and National Guildsmen alike. It does not give nationalisation or State ownership and administration of industry; but it gives a form of State control which the foolish will mistake for nationalisation. It does not give Trade Union or Guild control of industry; but it does offer a sort of control to the workman in the workshop. National Guildsmen, therefore, must formulate their alternative with a view to both these problems; they must define their attitude to the immediate problems of State control and nationalisation, and they must define their attitude to proposals for workshop control.

(1) To me it seems that the whole problem of nationalisation has radically altered as a result of the war. Some Guildsmen have always been opposed to nationalisation. I have never taken that view; and perhaps I can best define my past attitude as one of half-benevolent neutrality. To-day, my position is different. We are faced with the immediate alternatives in industry—the continuance of private ownership backed by State protection under the guise of control or nationalisation. Of the two I vastly prefer nationalisation. Under either system, the power of the State is arrayed on the side of the wage system; but the chance of developing the Guild idea and the Guild demand among the workers seems to me very much greater under national ownership than under State Capitalism. By it we at least secure that great step towards our ideal—unified management; and, if we do not abolish profiteering, we do at least crystallise it into the form of a fixed rate of interest. At some stage, we agree, the State must assume ownership of industrial capitalism; and it appears to me far better that it should assume ownership now than that it should stand openly as the protector and assurer of private capitalism. In connection with all proposals for nationalisation, the Guild demand for joint control with the State must be pressed, and pressed hard; but, even without that, Collectivism is to be preferred to State Capitalism.

(2) I now come to the question of workshop control, or, rather, to the wider question of industrial control of which workshop control is only a part, and by no means the greatest part. The Guild ideal is that of joint control of industry by the Guilds and the State, or, to define it better, the control of industry by the Guilds acting in conjunction with the State. It is not that of joint control by employers and employed, and such joint control, properly so called, can even be, to my mind, a stage in the evolution of the Guilds. Joint control, in the sense of harmonious co-operation, cannot subsist between the parties when one is trying to displace the other altogether, and our ideal is nothing less than the complete displacement of capitalism. The development of Trade Unionism towards the Guilds must therefore take the form, not of the acceptance of joint responsibility for the conduct of industry by the Trade Unions, but of increasing interference by them in the conduct of industry. Where a whole province of industrial management can be taken bodily out of the hands of the employers and transferred to the workers, well and good; that is a stage in the evolution

of National Guilds; but until such complete transference can take place in any sphere, the action of the Trade Unions must remain external, and, to that extent, irresponsible, if they are to maintain their independence and their freedom to go further.

Let us seek now to apply these principles to the question of workshop control. If workshop control means the assumption by the Trade Union of the responsibility for the discipline and ordering of the workshop, well and good, provided the transference of power is complete; but, if what is meant is joint control of workshop discipline by employers and employed, ill and bad for the independence of Trade Unionism and the freedom of the individual worker. Actual suggestions for workshop control seem, however, to point less to either of these things than to the institution of Workshop Committees for the adjustment of workshop conditions and grievances. What is to be the Guildsman's attitude to such proposals? It all depends. If it is to be acceptable, the Works Committee must be less a Joint Committee than two Committees meeting for joint consultation. The workers' side of the Committee must preserve its separate character, and must be linked up with the organised machinery of the Trade Union movement. The Works Committee must be not so much a legislative body passing laws for the works as a meeting of the management and the Trade Unionists for adjusting conditions and relations in the workshop. In fact, the Trade Unionists, in their policy on Works Committees, must follow the path, not of joint responsibility for industry, but of collective interference in industry.

The attitude must be the same in relation to proposals for joint action between employers and employed over areas wider than the single works. Proposals are current for Industrial Parliaments and for joint Committees, both national and local. In all cases, the Trade Unions must beware of entering into partnership with the employers in the conduct of industry, and, above all, from acquiring an interest in the maintenance of capitalist industry. They must keep their independence unspotted from profiteering and the profiteers, if they are not to find that, in seeming to gain a first instalment of control over industry, they have lost their own souls and the power to rise to higher forms of control. The maintenance of the strength and independence of Trade Unionism must be in all things the first consideration; and no immediate step that seems a gain, however great, must be taken if it involves, even in the smallest degree, a sacrifice of Trade Union independence or strength.

These are the main general considerations which are present to my mind in relation to Labour policy after the war. If they seem too largely negative, I must answer that we cannot hope for great positive advances while the standard of organisation, leadership, and intelligence in the Trade Union movement remain what they are to-day. We can only seek, and hope for, such changes as will reorganise Trade Unionism internally and equip it intellectually for the task of winning control. Viewed in the light of this immediate aim, does the policy put forward seem so negative after all? Workshop control, if it takes the form rather of interference than of responsibility, will afford the most valuable training the workers can have for their greater task. The more they learn to intervene, and the more continuous their intervention becomes, the more they will be learning how to control. Actual control they will win only when they are fitted to exercise control; and they can have no better weapon in the conflict than a fitness for victory.

There are, of course, a thousand and one subsidiary problems which confront Labour in formulating its after-the-war policy. I have concentrated on the problem that seems to me fundamental. The real issue for Society is whether industry is to continue its development along the lines of autocratic control from above, or whether industrial autocracy is to be displaced by the industrial democracy of National Guilds. An immediate policy for Guildsmen will be also an immediate policy for Trade Unionism; for there is no other democratic industrial policy in the field, and Trade Unionism must perish unless it can arm itself with a constructive industrial policy.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

It is some years since Mr. Huntly Carter, in the columns of *THE NEW AGE*, eloquently applauded almost every new development of stage production that he could discover in any foreign country, and as eloquently denounced everything theatrical that was done in this country. My memory of the whole series is rather vague and confused, but I think that Mr. Carter's enthusiasm for theatrical ideas led him into advocacy, instead of exposition, of certain developments. Mr. Bakshy* does not fall into this error; he expounds, but he reaches an eclectic conclusion. His examination of modern Russian stage production reveals no unifying principle; "all the theatrical reformers will tell you," he says, "that the improvements they introduce are a step towards the realisation of the Ideal Theatre," but he observes that they, like the Socialists of whom "G. K. C." wrote, are advancing in all directions. There is no such thing as an Ideal Theatre, no such thing as a standard form of art; and Mr. Bakshy concludes very wisely: "The whole point is in the right use of the medium, which is tantamount to saying that the form must be adequate to the subject, and both must carry conviction."

The whole dispute that is here summarised has little or nothing to do with drama, as the term is understood by modern men. To these theorists, the theatre is itself an art form to be manipulated to produce certain effects. Some of the theorists regard the theatre as a whole, including the audience; some of them exclude the audience, some of them "dematerialise" the stage. The Moscow Art Theatre, for example, pretended to exclude the audience; "the play's the thing" to them, and they imagined a fourth wall filling the proscenium opening through which a spectator could look only with difficulty. Their motto was: "Act well by stealth, and blush to find it fame"; and they reduced the audience to a congregation of Peeping Toms. Their zeal for the reality of the life of the stage led them to the use of some strange devices; "rain on the Art Stage did make the actors wet, waterfalls were no sham imitation," and I suppose that if they had produced some of our English melodramas, they would have shot real bullets from their revolvers, and stabbed with unabated daggers. Perhaps without knowing it they were as determined to abolish the actor as is Mr. Gordon Craig; anyhow, "the naturalistic method tended to reduce the contrasts between what was the principal and the secondary, the climax and the moments leading up to it, to the dead level of the mean, and agreed ill with many of the plays produced, particularly of the classical repertoire opposed to naturalism." It resulted in an extraordinary development of ensemble acting, which Mr. Granville Barker, particularly, has continued in this country; but ensemble acting tends to reduce a cast of dramatis personæ to a chorus, whose proper place is not on the stage.

Theory breeds theory, and the re-action discovered some obvious truths and others not so true, or, at least, not so obvious. Meyerhold discovered the audience, but he treated it rather better than the Moscow Art Theatre treated its actors. He did not deluge them

with rain, nor even turn a hose-pipe on them; but he tried to establish a unity between the audience and the actors in the spiritual world, where all differences are reconciled. "He staged Maeterlinck's dramas on one plane, i.e., he reduced the depth of the stage to a narrow band close to the footlights and placed the actors against flat decorative scenery, aiming thereby to dematerialise the stage and to merge the action of the play in the sway of emotions felt by the audience." The same thing is done at English music-halls, when a red-nosed comedian sings a song about beer, and the unity of spirit between actor and audience is obvious. But Meyerhold not only "dematerialised" the stage, he petrified the actors, although I suspect that the constant dropping of water on the Moscow Art Stage had already converted them into stalactites. The actors became "statuesque," and spoke with "a cold, metallic diction" that was at least intelligible.

But if Meyerhold froze his actors into mystical affinity with the audience, Evreinov tried to make the spectator believe that he was the actor, and was on the stage. The theory is very confusing, and the simplest explanation that I can give is in the words of Romeo:

Tut, I have lost myself; I am not here;
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

Evreinov's theory requires us to believe that "the word plays a subordinate part in the theatre. We hear more by eyes than by ears. Ergo—literature must not dominate the stage, but must play second-fiddle to the independent art of the theatre." In other words, Ear-Go; and ear goes!

Mr. Bakshy, in a subsequent essay on "Living Space and the Theatre," does not go quite so far as to say that "we hear more by eyes than by ears"; but he tells us some very funny things about our eyes. First of all, he says: "vosmí glazá v-roóki," which means "take your eyes in your hands." I always carry mine in a wash-leather bag in my waistcoat pocket; but Mr. Bakshy assures me that the Russians do otherwise, as the quoted proverb shows. It seems that if a man has only one eye, the perception of distance is weakened, and the surrounding objects seem to fuse into one continuous mass. This sensation of continuity results in a feeling of loss of individuality, and, like Shelley's Adonais, the one-eyed man feels that he has become "a portion of the loveliness which once he made more lovely." On the other hand, or in the other hand which contains the other eye, the two-eyed man is monarch of all he surveys within 500 yards; "the things we see begin to tear themselves off from the background which has been enveloping them, and step forward, each by itself, distinct from the others, and holding its own place." This sense of discontinuity makes the two-eyed man an Apollonian, while the one-eyed is only a Dionysian; but what happens to the cross-eyed man we are not told. Probably he sees himself walking towards himself at an angle of forty-five degrees, and calls himself Narcissus. Claudius, in "Hamlet," spoke of "the distracted multitude, who like not in their judgment, but in their eyes"; and it is not surprising that Mr. Bakshy develops his theory into a justification of the cinematograph. To that end, the "independent art of the theatre" tends "this bodiless creation ecstasy is very cunning in," said the Queen in "Hamlet," and Mr. Bakshy's ecstasy, inspired by the kine-plastikon, which produces three-dimensional pictures, reduces drama to the condition that Wagner imposed upon it in his first opera, when the very vigour of action had slain all the characters in the first act, and he had to continue with their ghosts. We shall be well advised to keep our eyes in our heads.

* "The Path of the Modern Russian Stage, and Other Essays." By Alexander Bakshy. (Palmer and Hayward. 7s. 6d. net.)

Readers and Writers.

I MEANT to have said in my notes last week upon Mr. Boyd's "Ireland's Literary Renaissance" (Maunsell. 10s. 6d. net) that the school of English writers or writers in English to which his Irishmen belong is a school of dream. Mr. Yeats makes Forgael somewhere say:—

Could we but give us wholly to the dreams,
And get into their world that to the sense
Is shadow, and not linger wretchedly
Among substantial things,

and therein he expresses, I think (in poor verse), what is really the motive and characteristic mood of the Irish school. It is not, in fact, a renaissance with which we are confronted, but a kind of falling adream. How beneficent to Ireland the evocation of this mood may be I do not care to guess; but of one thing I am certain, namely, that the only action likely to come out of it is sleep-walking or nightmare. In short, my opinion is that the "Literary Renaissance" is a fresh injustice to Ireland!

* * *

Still another postscript. Mr. Boyd quotes with rare enthusiasm Mr. Yeats' "lovely lines" as follows:—

Bend down your faces, Oona and Aeel:
I gaze upon them as the swallow gazes
Upon the nest under the eaves, before
He wander the loud waters.

To my mind these lines are far from lovely, and far from the best that Mr. Yeats has written—for I allow him some exquisite passages. I do not like the repetition of the long "a" in faces, gaze, gazes; "within the nest," would, I think, be more true and beautiful than "upon the nest"; and the last line suggests too unfamiliar a landscape to be associated with the peaceful eaves where the swallow builds. The bird might be a sea-gull or a kingfisher—but scarcely a swallow.

* * *

Among the writers mentioned with patriotic respect by Mr. Boyd is Lord Dunsany, whose "Tales of Wonder" (Elkin Mathews. 5s. net) I have just read. Lord Dunsany has an undoubted gift for story-telling; but it is not only uncultivated, it is fast running to weed and seed. His fancy is so prolific that I am disposed to think he relies upon it too much. All, I am sure, he finds it necessary to do is to invent a title, and then to spin a story under it, inventing as he goes along. I can even imagine him collecting titles and wagering to write a story under the most seemingly impossible. For instance, someone may have suggested to him: "Why the Milkman shudders when he perceives the Dawn"; and away he goes on the wings of fancy, as careless of the conclusion as you or I. The story under this title is, in fact, one of a hundred the title might suggest; and it is no better or worse than the other ninety-nine. "The Bird of the Difficult Eye" and "How Flash-goo came to the Land of None's Desire" are other examples. Quite a number of people have the same gift, but most of them keep it for the amusement of children. You will remember the case of little orphan Annie. Lord Dunsany is one of them.

* * *

I seem to have fallen into a company of such writers, for next upon my desk is Sir Rabindranath Tagore's "Fruit-Gathering" (Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net). May I quote a section, one of the eighty-six that make the whole book?

My king was unknown to me, therefore when he claimed his tribute I was bold to think I would hide myself, leaving my debts unpaid.

I flew and flew behind my day's work and my night's dreams.

But his claims followed me at every breath I drew. Thus I came to know that I am known to him, and no place left which is mine.

Now I wish to lay my all before his feet, and gain the right to my place in his kingdom.

Apart from the fact that what idea this shloka contains is to be found, infinitely more dramatically expressed, in Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven," I do not see even any comparative value in it. I am told that the genius of Tagore is to create an atmosphere; and, surely enough, if you read the present eighty-odd pieces at a sitting an atmosphere or mood is induced. But of what kind is it? What is its potency and what effects spring out of it? Read Milton's prose, for example, or the speeches of Demosthenes—and the resultant atmosphere is a stimulant of a vigorous vocabulary, at any rate. Similarly, all great writers are to be judged, as to their value, by the actual effects their reading induces in us. Again, therefore, I ask what is the effect upon us of reading Tagore? My reply is that the effect of Tagore is soporific, and, indeed, stupefying. In the mood induced by an hour of him I find myself quietist without resignation, and drowsy without restfulness. Take care, he scatters poppy.

* * *

To Professor S. Honaga, a Japanese author writing in English, it is probable that courtesy will extend the same leniency of criticism as Mr. Boyd would have for Irish writers, or our newspaper men for Sir Rabindranath Tagore. How can we in common politeness (as Johnson suggested) criticise from the standpoint of deportment a dog walking upon its hind legs? Nevertheless, it shall be said in THE NEW AGE that the spectacle embarrasses us. We wish to be polite, but we cannot but grieve at the necessity for it. Professor Honaga's "National Spirit of Japan" (Arrowsmith. 1s. net) ought, however, to justify itself, if not on the ground of its English, upon the ground of its illumination of its subject. A Japanese writing in English upon Japan owes us a debt. What he actually tells us, however, falls into one or other of two classes of information—the childish and the irritating. It is childish, for example, to pretend that the predominant motive of Japan's participation with England in the present war was respect for her plighted word. And it is irritating to discover that all Professor Honaga has to remark upon the interesting, nay, menacing, question of the relation of Japanese art to Japanese civilisation (shall we say foreign policy?) is to invite the world "to pay deeper attention to, and to make surer criticism of, its strong points and weaknesses." Why, to attend to these very points was our only purpose in taking up Professor Honaga's work! And in merely leaving them as questions he has done us no service.

* * *

In a well-written preface to her new volume, "Men, Women and Ghosts" (Macmillan. 5s. 6d. net), Miss Amy Lowell, perhaps the most original of all the young American writers of to-day, succeeds in giving us, at last, an intelligible explanation of what her school means by vers libre. "It has long been a favourite idea of mine," she says, "that the rhythms of vers libre have not been sufficiently plumbed, that there is in them a power of variation which has never yet been brought to the light of experiment. . . . I think it was the piano pieces of Debussy, with their strange likeness to short vers libre poems, which first showed me the close kinship of music and poetry; and there flashed into my mind the idea of using the movement of poetry in somewhat the same way that the musician uses the movement of music. It was quite evident that this could never be done in the strict pattern of a metrical form, but the flowing, fluctuating rhythm of vers libre seemed to open the door to such an experiment. First, however, I considered the same method as applied to the more pronounced movements of natural objects. If the reader will turn to the poem, 'A Roxbury Garden,' he will find in the first two sections an attempt to give the circular movement of a hoop, bowling along the ground, and the up and down, elliptical curve of a flying shuttlecock"—and so on.

This very explicit statement of the "ideas" of *vers libre* held by one who is not the least of her kindergarten enables us to examine the subject with a little more determinateness than usual. And, so examined, its fallacies, I think, come to light almost of their own motion. What are they? There is the fallacy that music and poetry are comparable arts, and have really, each of them, something to teach the other. That alone is an elementary misconception due to mistaking analogies for identities; but it is made more misleading still by Miss Lowell's naïve assumption that music is less subject to the strict control of form than verse. For this, again, is to mistake the "phrasing" of music for licence in the matter of measure. Form in music, on the contrary, is no less strict than form in what the *vers librettists* are pleased to call the patterned verse of classical writers; and to leap from the latter to the former in the hope of finding greater freedom is to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. Next, it is a complete and a very ignorant fallacy to assume that what the *vers librettists* aim at doing in verse "akin to music" is not possible within the strict pattern of a metrical form. Miss Lowell's object in writing *vers libre* is to express, as she thinks, natural rhythms as they have never been expressed in words before, and as they cannot, in her opinion, be expressed in regular forms. And I call this ignorant, because, in fact, not only may any rhythm within the compass of any words be expressed in the strict pattern of a metrical form, but for every such expression in *vers libre* I would undertake to find a better example in regular verse. It is true that I cannot at this moment recall an attempt to express in regular metre the bowling of a hoop, or the flight of a shuttlecock; but a thousand examples of similar onomatopœia in rhythm—with other subtleties in addition—are to be found in any classical anthology. Tennyson is full of such devices from phrases like "oily bubbled up the mere" to the closing dramatic stanzas in "The Revenge." "Professor Saintsbury has remarked" (I am quoting Mr. Lamborn's "Rudiments of Criticism"—a work I recommend to *vers librettists*) "that in the stanza

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

—the rush of words corresponds with the swift movement they express." And a boy of twelve suggested to Mr. Lamborn that, beyond this general correspondence, the actual sound of a keel forced swiftly through waves can be heard in the repeated ff's. Perhaps one of the most exquisite examples of such onomatopœia is Shelley's

Wild roses, and ivy serpentine
With its dark leaves and buds wandering astray.

in which "the rhythm suggests the waving and winding of the trailing plants" as no *vers libre* could better. Why fly to *vers libre* with its mechanical devices—largely typographical—when in regular forms such rhythms are possible? Why, above all, believe that *vers libre* is undertaking something new when, indeed, its aim is as old as poetry? Free rhythm, in my sense of the word, is one of the liberties of the kingdom of poetry which itself is essentially formal beauty. It does not imply freedom from regular or formal rhythm, but merely freedom within it. Let the *vers librettists* compare the free rhythm of Shakespeare within the limits of blank verse with the freedom of their own school outside all formal limits—not even Miss Lowell, I believe, will claim to be more free of poetry.

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It remains to be said of Miss Lowell that she is, if not an original poet, an original writer. Her style is as unmistakably her own as Browning's was his. It is wilful, personal, and, in its way, powerful. I do not call it poetry; and I will not call it *vers libre*; it is just

Miss Lowell's way of telling stories. And as Browning neither belonged to nor founded any school of poetry, Miss Lowell, for all her propaganda, is equally unique. Like Whitman, she belongs not to poetry but to America.

* * *

In supplement to my notes of last week I may now add a remark or two upon the claim by M. Cammaerts that Belgian literature, when written in French, is not French. His claim will be found in an article in the "New Witness," wherein he affirms that the Belgian writers are "Flemings who only express themselves in French." To associate in the same literary family Verhaeren and de Régnier, merely because they both wrote in French, is, he says, as illegitimate as to associate Yeats (whose name, alas, he spells Yates!) and Kipling, because they both wrote in English. "And if you mix up Verhaeren and French poets, why not also English and American literature?" Well, why not? Except for certain mannerisms of a local character—dialect, in short—I know of no essential difference between American and English writing, and I much doubt whether, substance apart, an English work could be distinguished from an American work of the same order. And as for Yeats and Kipling, the difference between the Irish and the English poets is no greater than the difference between Coleridge, say, and Kipling, both English. M. Cammaerts goes on to claim for the Belgian writers certain qualities "which can on no account be confused with the French"—a keen sense of colour, a predilection for scenes of good cheer, and a sense of the mystery of things, for example. But even when we have denied, with examples in substantiation, that any of these qualities is "almost completely lacking in the French"—for what of Flaubert, Loti, Rabelais, and Huysmans?—we could still maintain that such "qualities" of writing may form a school, but do not constitute a separate literature. Have we not known many such "schools" in English literature, beginning with the Italianate school of Chaucerian days, and continuing to the Irish school of to-day? Because Elizabethan writers came under the influence of the Italian renaissance, would their writings in English be properly styled Italian literature? Moreover, we know that modern Belgian literature is not only French in language, it is largely French in source. Baudelaire and Verlaine have been acknowledged to be the inspiration of the recent Belgian school of poetry. And being French in these respects, is not the result French literature written by Belgians? The claim, in short, that Belgian literature is Belgian and not French is even more preposterous than the claim that Irish literature is not English. Irish literature, as I said last week, is not only a "school" of thought, having its characteristics peculiar to the Irish national mind, but it both derives mainly from Irish sources, and shows a tendency to develop (as in Synge) an Irish style, based upon the Irish dialect of English. But Belgian literature can claim no distinction from the French in any of these respects save the first. It is a school, indeed—and a bad one, but no matter now! But neither is its source Belgian, nor has it embodied in the French in which it writes any syntactical or stylistic quality that is peculiarly Belgian. Under these circumstances, I can only deny the claim of M. Cammaerts even more emphatically than I denied the similar claim of Mr. Boyd.

* * *

Many of my readers will remember with pleasure a series published a couple of years ago in these columns under the title of "Letters to a Nephew," by Mr. Anthony Farley. They will hear with as much pleasure that the series will shortly be published in book-form by Messrs. Harrap. There are, I understand, other papers and letters still to be collected under the same editorship (or is it authorship?); and I believe that they will make their serial appearance in THE NEW AGE. At least, I hope so.

R. H. C.

Letters from Ireland.

By C. E. Bechhofer.

I FIND Achill Island the quintessence of Ireland. The next Irish king (A.E., say) should make Achill his Tara and no other part of his dominions should ever contain his Court. As I am neither Irish nor a king, I am bound to attempt an explanation of my whim.

The few hundred yards of sea-way between Achill and the mainland make a fine passage for coasting vessels, sheltering them from the waves and winds of the open Atlantic outside. And how marvellously this little strait separates the island from the mainland! They are different worlds. You will find Achill Island mentioned in the Connemara plays of Synge and the others, but I cannot recall that any scene is actually set in it. English readers will recall the island in George Birmingham's amusing, if empty, "Spanish Gold." That island is not Achill; but they are neighbours, and the atmosphere is similar. I have heard life in Achill described as a series of chuckles rising to a laugh; all I am now seeing goes to confirm this. By itself this description shows how superior Achill is to the morbid mainland. Here, and only here, can I feel that Lever spoke truly when he said that the Genius of Laughter presides over Ireland. Let the rest of the country claim Tantalus for its patron saint, as Mr. Hobson suggests; I still feel that Achill is true Ireland.

To speak fantastically, I would say that Achill Island is Ireland's city of refuge. I mean that it is the treasury of its courage, hope and traditions. Such, at least, is my impression, and I must try to interpret the oracle. Achill may have been the last stronghold of an Irish Army. The tendency of the English and other invasions must always have been to drive the unconquered Irish westward. Indeed, we know that one may nowadays expect to find the unexpurgated Irishman only in the west. What happened, then, to the last of the fighters? The Irish have always been between the English and the deep sea; it is often said that, unlike most other nations, they have had finally nowhere to retreat. The Finns, scattered by the rising Muscovite power, were able to withdraw into the Urals, on the one side, and to modern Finland, on the other; the irreconcilable Boers trekked away into the veldt. But where did the sturdiest Irish flee? To New York, you will say. But that is exile, not retreat. Achill is a mountainous island close in to a dangerous shore, a natural fortress, neither too large nor too small for a couple of thousand men, and equally well adapted for defence and for sallies. Was it not suited to be a fastness for a brave Irish chieftain? Whoa, whim!

Let us now praise Achill men! You see that I have come prepared to find the islanders finer men than those of the mainland. The more I see of them, the more I think that this is right. Indeed, every one who knows Achill agrees that its inhabitants are the pick of the Irish peasantry. In a sense, they are the Italians of Ireland; innumerable tales are told of their cunning and boldness. They are shrewd; they are witty; they are liars; they are proud; they are handsome; they are free; they are barbaric. But, I say to all who would civilise them, beware! They are, above everything, practical jokers!

One old man of them drove me this morning across the island. After a mile or two, his horse relapsed into a walk. I expostulated, but my driver assured me that his horse was fresh and always trotted the whole way. I could not make him believe that the horse was walking. To tell the truth, I dared not. He soon began to divert my attention to the scenery. Pointing out a ruined tower on a hill, he told me it was one of the strongholds of Grace O'Malley, a traditional local heroine. It was not; it was only a Martello tower, but I dared not say so.

I should like to write a history of Achill. I should make it a string of anecdotes; for such is its nature.

For example:—"I have heard tell how the Achill men, finding the price of harvesters' tickets to Dublin raised against them one summer, outwitted the railway. They arranged for a cattle-truck to be attached to the train by which they intended to leave, and, just as the train was starting, they announced that they themselves were the cattle and took their places in the truck. There was no time to contest their pretensions and they actually made a progress in triumph to Dublin, the peasantry turning out all along the route to cheer them on.

"And I have heard tell that, the year after this, the railway again refused to lower the fares for them, and was on its guard against surprises. The Achill men who were, as usual, departing in a body, lined up at the booking-office. I do not know how many score they were, but at the end of their long line stood a few ordinary passengers, also eager to buy tickets. A few minutes before the train was due to leave, the station-master opened the wicket and asked the first Achill man what he wanted. He said he would like a harvesters' ticket to Dublin. The station-master replied that the ticket would cost ten shillings and sixpence. The Achill man said that he had always hitherto paid only eight and sixpence. The station-master retorted that he would have to pay the new rate or not travel at all. The Achill man appealed to the station-master as to a friend and a benevolent man to sell him a ticket at the old rates. Then the engine-driver whistled shrilly, to show that the train was due to leave. The station-master looked at the long line waiting for tickets and cut short the Achill man's coaxing by telling him either to pay ten and six or to stand aside. The Achill man sighed and very reluctantly put down a sixpence and a coin wrapped in silver paper. The station-master opened the paper, found a half-sovereign in it, rang it, and threw out a ticket. The harvester passed on into the train, and a second Achill man took his place. He commenced, like the first, by asking the station-master what the cheap fare to Dublin was. He next inquired if he could not have a ticket at eight and six, for old times' sake. The engine-driver whistled three piercing blasts.

"I have heard tell that the second harvester, after talking for another two or three minutes, paid at last a half-sovereign wrapped in a piece of silver paper and a sixpence, and received a ticket. Then a third Achill man took his place, and, after the same long-winded formalities, he, too, failed to coax the station-master into selling him a ticket at the old cheap rates. He then put down his half-sovereign wrapped in silver paper and a sixpence, and was replaced by a fourth and equally insinuating Achill man. The engine-driver fastened his whistle so that it should screech without interruption. The station-master ran out of the ticket-office with a handful of tickets and shouted to the harvesters to pay their ten and sixpence without a murmur or to leave the station. The Achill men filed past him; each dropped into his hand a coin wrapped in silver paper and a sixpence, took a ticket, and got into the train. The ordinary passengers, too, were at last able to buy their tickets, and the train quickly departed. The station-master began to count his money, opening the silver paper packets. He found that the first six contained half-sovereigns, but in the rest were only farthings!

"I have also heard tell that Sir William Byles, M.P., came to Achill last summer to ascertain the Achill men's grievances about their treatment at the English harvest. And I am told that several Dublin ladies, visitors to the island, arranged a deputation of islanders and sat one afternoon in a drawing-room with Sir William to receive it. They sat like this until the late evening, but no deputation arrived. The Achill men did not value their new champions!"

Faisons fin. But this is how I should like to write the history of Achill.

Orchestral Conducting.

To the majority of people the question "What is a conductor?" would probably conjure up in their minds pictures of a tram official punching tickets, or memories of personally conducted tours up the Rhine. But in this case our conductor is the man who stands on the platform and conducts, with a stick, an orchestra or a chorus, or both, through the medium of music. Here, again, people might take a short cut and conclude that the conductor merely beats time with a stick—which unfortunately is sometimes the whole truth, and very often at least half the truth. For there are all kinds of conductors, just as there are all kinds of singers and pianists and fiddle-players. I will divide them roughly, however, into two classes: the Academic Conductor and the Artist Conductor. To begin with, under the first heading, comes the military bandmaster who often is no more than a drill-sergeant, with his strict "down-left-right-up." "Left—left," says his baton; "One—two—three—four," and every umbrella among the audience is off irresistibly a-tapping, keeping in perfect step with the beats. This military rigour is, of course, reflected in every note the band plays, any inner meaning the music may possess being neglected, so that nothing is left of it but precision. There is a close relative of this type of academic conductor whom one meets all too often at choral and orchestral concerts, musical festivals and so on, to whom and through whom the music conveys little more than in the case of the military bandmaster. Conductors of this variety are often very smart; that is to say, they can "read" an orchestral score well and "conduct" it equally so, giving every orchestral and choral entry its correct lead or cue. But this automatic attention is all the music gets. For though the academic conductor may be the cleverest score-reader and time-beater, he has no more sympathy with the individual features of any particular piece of music than has the wood of which his baton is fashioned. His mind has no eyes: it lacks the power to insinuate itself into the mind and personality of the composer whose work he may be performing, and the most brilliant score-reading and time-beating cannot make up for the absence and loss of a faculty which is divination. Fortunately there is a good deal of academic music which can stand a square-leg style of rendering without dying of the treatment; in fact, the constitution of most English music written up to fifteen or twenty years ago is of a kind which enables it to weather the uninspired handling of the academic operative. Disastrous happenings, however, occur when a conductor of this school finds himself faced with a score, say, by Berlioz, Debussy, Ravel, Delius or Stravinski. Sometimes he is honest and confesses his inabilities; but more frequently alas! he attempts a performance, merely reading the score and giving the correct cues. I once met a conductor whose mentality travelled between the points of Handel's "Messiah" and Elgar's "Gerontius," and who took upon himself to conduct Bantock's "Omar"! The audience was mystified and the composer libelled! Another blithe spirit, who, with the finest orchestral and choral forces at his disposal, essayed Berlioz' great "Requiem," achieved the most amazing list of casualties. Even in the earthquake scene he maintained his jog-trot correct "down—left—right—up," and—in spite of the earthquake—he conducted sitting throughout. That, of course, may have been to show his contempt for Berlioz; or, on the other hand, he may have been ill—like his audience. But those who live on the lower slopes frequently do look down on those who dwell on the heights, and the academics often do affect a contempt for Berlioz because "he is not of them." I could give many other examples of the atrocities committed when the academic conductor forsakes his last and attempts dancing-pumps with a skill only fitted for

the shaping of clogs. Perhaps, however, I have said enough to warn my readers before going to an orchestral or a choral concert to make sure that the conductor has been measured for the programme. A thought will show even the amateur that a conductor of the academic gender will be out of his depths in the high seas of the unacademic school.

Turning to the artist conductor we walk into another world, as far from the academic domain as red wine is from red tape. The artist conductor not only knows all that his academic step-brother knows about score-reading and stick-wagging, but, in addition, he has that rare faculty called genius. To him an orchestral score is not mere notes and bar-lines. It is a personality to be interpreted and revealed to his audience. He is the mirror for the mind of the composer; and in his hands the baton, so often the stick with which the conductor simply flogs his class into dullness, now becomes the live communicating cord between composer and orchestra. One need not be an expert to realise the importance of the relations existing between a conductor and his orchestra. Only a perfect alliance between them can achieve a perfect victory. The best-trained animal would either bolt or become a rocking-horse in the hands of a master who was forever riding it on the curb; and even the cleverest hunter would bungle his jumps with a rider who hung on his reins at sight of them, or sat him as uneasily as a jelly sits its dish. What's bred in the baton comes out in the orchestra, and only with the born artist-conductor can we ever hope to get a fine rendering of a fine work. The pity is that conductors of this order are even more rare than audiences to appreciate them, and orchestral conducting as an art is comparatively new. Probably its first exponent was Hector Berlioz, who, before conducting, would visualise a work as a complete picture, and as such reproduced it in performance. Richter did a great deal of spade-work for us in destroying the old shibboleth that an orchestral score is a mere mass of notes and bar-lines, but he had limitations which dimmed his star into a "cross" between the academic world and the artist realm. Where the composer painted in massive, dark outlines demanding strength and vigour in interpretation no conductor has excelled Richter. Anyone who heard him do the great opening processional movement in Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" "Come ye Daughters," will never forget the majesty and intensity with which it moved along. It was conceived as a vast procession which might continue for ever. In passages of a different character, however, he was not so felicitous. Perhaps there was a factor of heaviness in his personality. Certainly a stranger seeing him for the first time walking down Deansgate, Manchester, could easily be forgiven for thinking that at home Richter might be found a farmer, plodding behind a team of horses in a plough-field. Nikisch, who possessed many of Richter's qualities in dignity, had greater brilliancy and freedom and a finer sense of colour. Richter, for example, would hold back the struggling demon of the Berlioz "Marche Hongroise"; but Nikisch would let the thing loose to surge and seethe like a myriad-tongued battle-cry. In the new age of music which has come flowing into England from the great mystical plains of Russia, it was the artist-conductor who first showed us the fresh beauties of "Boris Godounov," "Petrouchka," and the other Russian works which captivated everybody by their originality and charm. Indeed, realising our debt to it, it is difficult to believe that had they their way the academics would still lay hands on this very school of artist conductors to which we owe all our understanding of new works. Nevertheless it is true. Academism, clinging like a parasite on freedom, would fain choke it, and stifle genius. But its day is wellnigh spent; its hour has come. Let us cry with hope—The Conductor is dead! Long live the Conductor!

S. O. S.

The Function of Daggers.

By Dikran Kouyoumdjian.

I WAS minded to give some friend a present, and looking round my rooms for this purpose, my eye lighted on a dagger, which for long had lain unobserved upon a shelf. This was no outcome of prying into strange corners of antique shops, for a thing as such has little interest for my imagination; rather it had, in days when, as a child, I first set eyes on it, a strange fascination for me as a live thing, a muffled live thing which would live only when its sheath was cast off, and its blade was sinister with a white glittering. Later, it seemed to me a pleasantly vicious toy, and I resented my father's hanging it too high for my unaided reach, for fear lest I might play at a game of mock-believe killing with myself in a large mirror, such as he had once found me playing. And what stories could not an Armenian act over again in looking at the blade of this dagger? For no affectedly thin blade of Corsica, no curve of Moorish refinement was this, it was no ineffectual trumpery of your civilised West, fit only to grace your walls—but a short, straight, double-edged blade, such as Kurds and Circassians love to use. Its sheath, of a dark brown leather, pointed and embellished with curious workings in brass; its hilt, the foot of a mountain deer, such as abound in the hilly countries of Caucasia, tempting, somehow irresistibly, the clasp of your palm and fingers. Even as I write this, I begin to feel somewhat vengeful, to feel, since I may not use it myself, a childish temptation to indulge in such of the most lurid tales of blood-spilling as I know of—did that not strike my better sense as ludicrous in these times. With such a knife as this on the table before him, or, perhaps, with the blade fixed, buccaneer-fashion, between his teeth, I imagine the author of that horribly delightful essay, "Murder as One of the Fine Arts," to have sat down to his writing, the feel of the knife stimulating his fancy to re-act over again those tales of throat-slitting, with which, in all the venomous imagery of their occurrence, he indulged his readers. And were I at all unscrupulous, I might easily tell you of some name—say, Aram, for a good Armenian name—scratched upon the blade of my knife, which lie would then lay for me the basis for the telling of such a deed as would excite you in your reading. But, even without this added quota of melodrama, I will tell you of such a happening, in which a dagger—and you may believe, if you like, the legend I was told in my childhood that it was this very same dagger which I have pictured for you—played its great part.

It was not so very many years ago, when Russia had not yet discovered in herself a sense for small nationalities other than to absorb them entirely into herself, that her Armenian province of Caucasia was handed over to a reactionary Viceroy, who was judged to have the fit lack of human understanding to make him worthy of the duties imposed upon him. Did I follow all the steps by which this absurd bureaucrat thought to attain his end, I would call my essay, "The Best Way to Cause a Revolution." Church property, then, was confiscated, many schools were closed, and the language of the Empire made the only and compulsory language of such as were left open, and for every other business. In short, all the machinery necessary to dividing men into beasts of burden and beasts of prey was set into motion. Rebellion broke out in isolated parts of the province, to be quickly and ruthlessly stamped out. And the Viceroy was reported to have said that the Armenians were curs, and tame, cowardly curs at that, who could only bark but could not bite. Such, at least, were the words which, did he say them or did he not, were reported to the men in the hills; and they remembered them.

A week, two weeks, have passed, and it is a Sunday. And look! does not the cavalcade of the Viceroy, as he

passes through the cobbled, sun-glaring streets of Tiflis on his way to church, make a brave show? Before and behind his carriage ride a score of Cossacks, their rifles slung over their shoulders, their rakish black shakoes giving them a grotesquely fierce appearance; and in the middle is the carriage, in which are the Viceroy and Vicereine. Can you imagine him but as obese and coarse-featured, a bullet-headed pigmy, who flaunts his string of medals and his uniform as though they were part of God's wardrobe? But his wife I cannot imagine. Few of the people are in the streets this Sunday morning; many have already gone to their churches—and what may a Viceroy do, if he may not come late to church?—and the pomp of the too-often seen cavalcade has little attraction for those others, who, in these God-fearing lands, are fewer than in other countries. Then, suddenly, upon this peaceful clattering, rush out from a side street six men on horse-back. They are making headlong for the carriage; the Cossacks, the drivers, are taken by surprise; a few wheel their horses round to intercept the mad six, others try to hedge-in the carriage, there are shots, yells . . . and as a man leaps from his horse into the carriage, a naked dagger raised in his hand, a hoarse cry from the Viceroy, to whose medals, in one moment of hatred, is added yet another, but of demerit—the hilt of a dagger.

Say truly—is that not a brave murder! Or, if the ignoble word does not please you, is it not a brave killing? How easy it were to have never rushed, six against forty, to have thrown a bomb, to have fired a revolver from some window; so would they do, and so often have they done, in other countries. How one despises the mean bomb-throwing and revolver-play of the European revolutionary, so cowardly, so indiscriminate in his death-dealing! While, as in this case, even though certain death be the result—for all six were captured and paid the penalty—the dagger is the unerring agent; the very sparing of the Vicereine were a sufficiency of revenge in itself, the killing of the Viceroy being, in a manner, but incidental to this purpose of magnanimity. And that it was justified was proved by Russia looking round upon her bureaucrats, and giving Armenian Caucasia over to one who was judged, and rightly judged, by the very happy results, human enough not to run the risk of being decorated in a sudden moment with the First Class of the Order of Demerit. Such, then, is the only manner—and a mighty self-indulgence it is!—in which a dagger may be used without blame or reproach to honour, by the very circumstances of its use, in such cases, partaking rather of the spirit of war than of the meanness of murder.

There, you may think, the story should end; and that I, in saying that there is yet a sequel, which occurred but a few days ago, am preying rather inexcusably upon your so far good-mannered credulity. This sequel, however, like all such, and since, in this case, one can scarce imagine the same happening in the King's Tottenham Court Road as in the streets of a Caucasian town, is somewhat tame in comparison; in that the deed, so to speak, stopped at the intention. I had decided, then, to give my friend the dagger, and, being asked to dine with him that night, had placed it in my overcoat-pocket on going out in the afternoon, intending later to go straight to his house. Thus it was that at seven o'clock I was threading my way leisurely through the crowd in Tottenham Court Road. As I walked on, my hand in my overcoat-pocket grasping the hilt of the dagger, lest by some chance it should drop out, I had no other thought than as to the best, the most melodramatic, manner of presenting it to one who liked such things; I was just deciding, when—I cannot help the *odi profanum* which comes to my lips as I think of this—I was viciously, aggressively, bumped into. Whose nerves have not been set jangling by some sudden physical jar in the street? But not like that.

It was different—somehow. The sudden beastliness of this jar made me, I think, mad; the man, a clumsy, fat brute, stood swaying disgustingly in front of me, touching me, saying something—and my hand was on the hilt of the dagger. O to have been able to raise the unsheathed blade and plunge it deep into the fleshiness of that brute! I can feel it now—the sickly pain of reason resisting that natural impulse, conquering it, pushing me past that man, so near to death as never he was, causing me, a few steps farther on, to look back on that one wracking second with a thankful jeer at myself.

As I walked on, it occurred to me that, had I not had my hand on the hilt of the dagger, had I not had it in my pocket at all, I would never have felt the awful bitterness of the jar, would never have resented it so deeply, madly; would have taken it as one usually takes such things from the clumsy bulks which lurch along every pavement. For then, the very sense of one's helplessness is sub-consciously present at the very moment of one's anger, to neutralise it into, at most, a passing irritation. But when, as in my case, the sense of power to satisfy one's anger is also present at the same moment as the anger, it increases it a thousand-fold into the mad resentment which I experienced. There is the sequel, my parallel to the Viceroy. I am unused to moralising; but thus, I realised, commonplace men with power do strange things. I may well have been served to death had I been a Viceroy; he may well have been as amiable a fellow as I, losing his temper only over trivial things, trivially.

Views and Reviews.

FREUD ON WIT.

DR. BRILL tells us in his preface that "when it was agreed between Professor Freud and myself that I should be his translator, it was decided to render into English first the following five works: 'Selected Papers on Hysteria and Psychoneuroses,' 'Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex,' 'The Interpretation of Dreams,' 'Psycho-pathology of Everyday Life,' and the present volume. These works were selected because they represent the various stages of development of Professor Freud's psycho-analysis, and also because it was thought that they contain the material which one must master before one is able to judge correctly the author's theories or apply them in practice." With the publication of this volume,* then, the agreed series is complete; but Dr. Brill says that "although the original task is finished, the translator's work is only beginning. Psycho-analysis has made enormous strides. On the foundation laid by Professor Freud there developed a literature rich in ideas and content which has revolutionised the science of nervous and mental diseases, and has thrown much light on the subject of dreams, sex, mythology, the history of civilisation and racial psychology, philology, æsthetics, child-psychology and pedagogics, and mysticism and occultism." Psycho-analysis is the key to the unconscious; without its technique, the unconscious might be predicated, even observed (although it received very tardy recognition), but it could not be explored. What Darwin did for biology, Professor Freud has done for psychology, and with similar results; and a literature of such universal interest deserves to receive translation into all the civilised languages. If the missionaries choose to make translations for the heathen, so much the better; but that is a millennial vision.

* "Wit, and its Relation to the Unconscious." By Dr. Sigmund Freud. Translated by Dr. A. A. Brill. (Fisher Unwin. 8s. 6d. net.)

People in England have, of course, not waited for the translation of this volume before judging Professor Freud's work; science has never been really popular in England because the suspension of judgment that it entails is not easy to a people distinguished by a practical logic which, as Emerson said, "brings salt to soup, hammer to nail, oar to boat." We can match the story of Franklin retorting to an inquiry concerning the use of his experiments with the question: "What is the use of a new-born baby?" with Faraday's retort to a similar question from Gladstone: "Well, you can tax its results when I am dead." Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, although it really provided only a working hypothesis, did not have to wait for judgment until it could be proved or disproved; it was denounced heartily for all sorts of reasons that were not logically connected with it. We are wiser now about the theory of evolution; practically every subject of study is now pursued according to the general principle; but the clamour arises whenever a similar attempt is made to demonstrate processes which are, or seem to be, automatic. The dignity of civilised man is very precarious, particularly in England, with its "dedication to outsiders"; Congreve even said: "For my part, I am as willing to laugh as anybody, and as easily diverted with an object truly ridiculous; but, at the same time, I never care for seeing things which force me to entertain low thoughts of my own nature. I don't know how it is with you, but I confess freely to you, I could never look long upon a monkey without very mortifying reflections." This might be characterised as an intelligent anticipation of the English objection to the Christian perversion of Darwin's theory of the descent of man; but it serves to show with what difficulty even a wit like Congreve preserved that dignity of "a country gentleman" with which he tried to impress Voltaire.

The dignity of man seemed to be imperilled by Professor Freud's demonstration of some of his mental automatisms; but the judgment (or, rather, the condemnation) of his works is usually directed to his demonstration of the sexual origin of neurosis. Sex, of course, does not exist in England except as a subject of denunciation; it is synonymous with vice, and Pope was sadly deluded when he said that "vice is a monster of so foul a mien that, to be hated, needs but to be seen." It is the hidden vice that is the most fervently hated and denounced; as Browning said: "The feeblest sense is trusted most"; and people give the most elaborate descriptions of the things they never saw. I do not know whether Jeremiah Collier ever went to a theatre, but his "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage" is as emphatic as the Bishop of London's denunciation of modern revues, which, I believe, he never goes to see. The demonstration by Professor Freud of the sexual origin of manifold psychological phenomena made him liable to the charge, by people who did not want to see sex anywhere, that he saw sex everywhere; and beyond the denunciation or deprecation of Professor Freud's obsession, as it is generally called, English criticism of his works has not usually proceeded.

But the obsession of English criticism by Professor Freud's "obsession" cannot destroy the pleasure of reading. He admits that "no one is desirous of becoming acquainted with his unconscious"; but if the attribution of motives has any evidential value, most people are desirous of becoming acquainted with the unconscious of other people. Even the moralist is not free from curiosity, and Professor Freud's demonstration of the relation of wit to the unconscious is subtle enough to reward that curiosity. Even if that subtlety is unintelligible to the moralist, there is an analysis of a selection of sexual jokes that will give him material for denunciation; although the moralist will be disappointed to hear that Professor Freud does not assert a

sexual origin of wit. Although he shows a technique of wit similar to that of dreams, he also shows that wit exhibits many differences from dreaming, and arises from a different sphere of the unconscious. The differences are best described in his own language. "The most important difference lies in their social behaviour. The dream is a perfectly social psychic product. It has nothing to tell to anyone else, having originated in an individual as a compromise between conflicting psychic forces it remains incomprehensible to the person himself, and has, therefore, altogether no interest for anybody else. Not only does the dream find it unnecessary to place any value or intelligibility, but it must even guard against being understood, as it would then be destroyed; it can only exist in disguised form. For this reason, the dream may make use freely of the mechanism that controls unconscious thought processes to the extent of producing undecipherable disfigurements. Wit, on the other hand, is the most social of all those psychic functions whose aim is to gain pleasure. It often requires three persons, and the psychic process which it incites always requires the participation of at least one other person. It must, therefore, bind itself to the condition of intelligibility; it may employ disfigurement made practicable in the unconscious through condensation and displacement, to no greater extent than can be deciphered by the intelligence of the third person. As for the rest, wit and dreams have developed in altogether different spheres of the psychic life, and are to be classed under widely separated categories of the psychological system. No matter how concealed, the dream is still a wish, while wit is a developed play. Despite its apparent unreality the dream retains its relation to the great interests of life; it seeks to supply what is lacking through a regressive detour of hallucinations; and it owes its existence solely to the strong need for sleep during the night. Wit, on the other hand, seeks to draw a small amount of pleasure from the free and unencumbered activities of our psychic apparatus, and later to seize this pleasure as an incidental gain. It thus secondarily reaches to important functions relative to the outer world. The dream serves preponderantly to guard from pain while wit serves to acquire pleasure; in these two aims, all our psychic activities meet."

It is impossible to state here Professor Freud's analysis of wit, and I distrust all summaries of the process; for the value of an analysis which is accompanied by an induction is apparent only when the evidence is examined, and I cannot quote the whole book. But Professor Freud brings his work to a conclusion by stating the "formulae for wit, comic and humour," which summarises his conclusions in a manner which may serve to send readers to the book, wherein only can the process of analysis be studied. "Now, that we have reduced the mechanism of humoristic pleasure to a formula analogous to the formula of comic pleasure and of wit, we are at the end of our task. It has seemed to us that the pleasure of wit originates from an economy of expenditure in inhibition, of the comic from an economy of expenditure in thought, and of humour from an economy of expenditure in feeling. All three activities of our psychic apparatus derive pleasure from economy. They all strive to bring back from the psychic activity a pleasure which has really been lost in the development of this activity. For the euphoria which we are thus striving to obtain is nothing but the state of a bygone time in which we were to defray our psychic work with slight expenditure. It is the state of our childhood in which we did not know the comic, were incapable of wit, and did not need humour to make us happy." I anticipate the objection that this is a hedonistic conclusion, and is, therefore, immoral, by quoting Christ, Whose Word is authoritative in this country: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." A. E. R.

Reviews.

The Devonshire House Circle. By Hugh Stokes. (Herbert Jenkins. 12s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Stokes' "circle" resembles the love of God in one particular: its circumference is nowhere. The crowd of figures in this book is bewildering, the more so because every one of them is a character worthy of detailed description. For although we may differ from Talleyrand's statement, quoted by Mr. Stokes at the beginning of his book: "They who did not live before 1789 knew not the sweetness of life": we must confess that during the latter part of the eighteenth century life had at least the charm of variety. If a man had no character, he developed a foible so assiduously that it became a characteristic; or failing that, had a streak of lunacy in his composition that made him interesting. "Sweetness there may have been, but only within doors, behind barred windows and stone walls. Devonshire House, in spite of its gates, still looks like a prison; and at a time when there were highwaymen in Park Lane and even Piccadilly, when an election was a riot (the Guards who were called to suppress it were ordered by the King to march in a body to the hustings and tender their votes), when the criminal classes and the police waged civil war without quarter, even domestic architecture had to present a formidable front. Devonshire House looks as dull as the Dukes, who made a cult of pococurantism; but within it lived a remarkable trio, and through it passed everybody who was anybody. Fox and Gibbon, George Selwyn and Burke, Sheridan, all paid their tribute to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; and, of course, Johnson "seemed to dissolve under so flattering an approval" as was implied by her "contending for the nearest place to his chair." Georgiana herself wrote verse, of the kind called "occasional," and perpetrated at least one novel, of the kind called "inevitable"; and the Strawberry Hill group, no less than the cream (or scum?) of Grub Street were as welcome as the gamblers who also kept her occupied. Burke said that the eighteenth century was distinguished by producing extraordinary women, and undoubtedly the remark was based on those he saw at Devonshire House. It would be easy to believe that his famous panegyric of Marie Antoinette was at least coloured by his memories of Georgiana, whose friend she was. Certainly, the women of Devonshire House were extraordinary; Lady Elizabeth Foster, first a sort of governess of the daughter of one of the Duke's mistresses, next herself the Duke's mistress, and subsequently the second Duchess, lived and loved in the same house with Georgiana, and was Georgiana's staunchest friend. It was to Lady Foster that Gibbon proposed, and could not rise, after his rejection, without the assistance of a servant. Extraordinary people, extraordinary situations! If the wit was sometimes forced, yet it had zest, a full flavour of a full-blooded life. It was certainly more amusing than the humour of the Royal families; Mr. Stokes tells us: "A letter from the Duke of Dorset to the Duchess of Devonshire gives a picture of Marie Antoinette in the gardens of the little Trianon at Versailles a few weeks before the scandal of the diamond necklace covered the sky with threatening storm-clouds, for the Cardinal de Rohan had not yet been condemned to exile. The Queen had been entertaining a party of thirty that day. After dinner their chief amusement consisted in throwing each other's hats into the lake. Lord George (probably Lord George Cavendish) was the only man who could punt a boat; so he was given the business of fishing the hats out of the water. Curiously, at almost the same time the Prince of Wales and his brothers were in company with Philippe of Orléans, and their romping took the form of pushing each other—and some ladies in addition—into an ornamental pond of an English park." Drunk or sober, the Devonshire House

Circle never fell to this; with all her high spirits and boisterous energy, Georgiana could find better entertainment for her guests than horseplay.

Giordano Bruno: His Life, Thought, and Martyrdom. By William Boulting. (Kegan Paul. 10s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Boulting apologises for the appearance of this work, with too great modesty; for we are not all bursting with information concerning this philosopher who was martyred during the Counter-Reformation. Mr. Boulting says: "Some facts, unrecorded in England, have come to light of late years, and also that a few usual, almost unavoidable, inaccuracies require correction. Moreover, I have tried to follow the development of Bruno's thoughts in the order in which he declared them; and, on one or two points, I find myself compelled to differ from the conclusions of this or the other commentator." We may suggest that Mr. Boulting would have enhanced the value of his book to the general reader if he had added a chapter, summarising Bruno's philosophical conclusions and comparing his speculations concerning the nature of physical reality with the results obtained by modern science. The man wrote so much that it is difficult to remember what he did prove; and so many of his subjects and speculations are now obsolete that his value to this age is not easy to discover. He seems to have influenced Spinoza in philosophy; while his comedy, "Il Candelajo," seems to have influenced first Giambattista della Porta, whose work was adapted into French, and influenced Cyrano de Bergerac, who influenced Molière; and it has been suggested that Shakespeare's *Holofernes*, in "Love's Labour Lost," is derived from Manfurio in "Il Candelajo." But admitting this, his life, thought, and martyrdom seem to have been of singularly small importance, except so far as personal assertion is valuable in any age of oppressive authority. He claimed "philosophic freedom in thought and speech"; and he certainly denounced Aristotle, and cursed Oxford, and got into trouble in Paris, and Geneva, and most of the places in which he stayed. Mr. Boulting presents him as the characteristic genius type, a man who spoke as he thought—sometimes before he thought, without caution or consideration—a frantic philosopher. Only at the end, when he was on trial for his life, and had to answer what were not so much accusations as imputations of bad motive, did he betray any acute consciousness of the presence of other people; and even then, his assumption of their desire to be perfectly fair to him, to agree with him if only he could make them understand his point of view, showed the incurable naïveté of the philosopher. That he did not seek martyrdom, is to his credit; he suffered it without flinching, despising death, and went "a flame to the flames." The man was greater than his works.

The English Church and Re-Union. By Arthur Chandler. (Methuen. 3s. 6d. net.)

The problem of re-union occupies a very small portion of this book; to the Bishop of Bloemfontein, it is not an immediately practical problem, but an ideal, a goal, towards which all Christendom must move if it would do useful work and retrieve its past failures. Really the problem is a problem of government; while Rome insists upon submission, Protestant bodies cannot even consider the question. Federalism is, of course, the fashionable solution to all problems of government; but a federal union of the Churches would still give Rome the hegemony. The historicity of the Anglican Church and of the Free Churches begins with the Church of Rome; and any attempt to establish the minimum of dogma and sacrament necessary to membership of even a federated Church only means asking Rome to make allowances for varying degrees of dissent from her claims. Dr. Chandler does not believe in the federal solution; "Re-union will not be brought about on the lines of Federation, nor by unconditional surrender, but by Reconciliation on a higher plane. . . .

We shall attain Re-union when we share in one life, the Life of Christ communicated through appointed rites, a Life which shall gather up into itself all the existing organisations, efforts, and aspirations of a divided Christendom. This Sacramental Life, safeguarded and guaranteed through the Apostolic ministry which conveys it, will act as a real, unifying bond; within the unity of that Life there will be room for an almost unlimited diversity of practices and methods." So he devotes the major portion of his book to the statement of the principles and ideals inherent and expressed in the English Church, and to show that these are historically Christian. But Dr. Chandler has "to recognise that in many ways the Church has fallen miserably short of them; the stress of controversy has led her to exaggerate and caricature them; the rival bugbears of Rome and Dissent have often paralysed her pastoral activity; and she has failed pre-eminently in the maintenance and exercise of authority." He exhorts the Anglicans to look for resemblances instead of differences, to see that even the Nonconformists have a ministry and some sacraments, while Rome, on the other hand, is not always despotic. Not in form, but in spirit, the Churches should seek re-union; "until that unity is attained, we shall go on aiming at a shallow and fallacious veneer of uniformity, which is undesirable in itself and certainly no basis for Re-union."

Abraham Lincoln. By Lord Charnwood. (Constable. 6s. net.)

This is an addition to the "Makers of the Nineteenth Century" series, of whom Lincoln certainly was one, and for America, the most important. Lord Charnwood presents a very balanced view of him, which is well on this side of idolatry; and is far more interesting than most variants of the Lincoln legend. Lincoln grows slowly before your eyes in this volume, adapting himself, not with supreme ease nor with incredible effort, but with a quiet expression of himself, to every emergency. He seems to grow with every emergency, actually to rise to the occasion not by levity but by a vital process. The gradual growth of Lincoln is one of the most fascinating passages of this biography, and a third of this volume deals with the period prior to his Presidency. The Springfield debates, as Lord Charnwood relates their history, intensify this impression; from first to last of them, Lincoln was becoming not only an abler thinker, a more clever debater, but a bigger man, more of the stature of a President than a party politician. But he did not cease growing when he reached the Presidency; if he thrived on emergencies, there was no lack of them in his Cabinet or his country. He had to use men who despised him and detested each other; he had to deal with problems that not only divided the country but divided his supporters; he was attacked from all sides because he never dealt with a matter until he was ready for it, and he would not allow anyone to make up his mind for him. More and more as the war went on did he develop into the real director of the destinies of his nation; he studied strategy so that he might be able to form an intelligent opinion of the operations of his generals; he quietly intervened in foreign affairs when his too enthusiastic secretary might have precipitated war. If he did not personally guide every department, he so influenced its head that, consciously or unconsciously, it did what Lincoln wanted. He consulted his Cabinet often, and deferred to its judgment frequently; but when he was sure of the necessity, he acted without advice from them or anyone. His patience was as steady and invariable as a force of Nature; he gave himself time to grow to understanding of men and problems; he seems to have acted only on certitudes, his own certitudes, and the story of his life, as told by Lord Charnwood, is a record of the steady growth of confidence in himself. It is a remarkable feat of biography.

Pastiche.

UTOPIAN PRESS CUTTINGS.

Collected by John Triboulet.

According to the latest statistics, the number of English citizens is 40,950, there having been a sharp decrease during the past year, but we can congratulate ourselves on the fact that the general population of the country has greatly increased during the same period. The figures are 56,060,540 in 1925 and 59,741,039 in 1926.

The crisis in the mining industry ended yesterday. The delegates of the Mine Workers' Guild were permitted to wait upon the directors of the Mine Owners' Guild. The following report has been submitted for publication.

After the introduction of the workers' delegates, who performed the usual ceremony of kissing the directors' feet, a statement was read aloud by the spokesman of the deputation. "The members of the Mine Workers' Guild," it ran, "do humbly beseech the worshipful directors of the Mine Owners' Guild to consider their request that an addition be made to the pay fund of their guild. The amount allowed last year was carefully paid out by their elected delegates, among whom were three who had received the M.D.P. (Medal for Distinguished Parsimony). It is thought that an addition to the pay fund equal to one penny per diem per head would be sufficient, and this amount would be gratefully received," etc.

After the petition had been read, the conversation reported below passed between the chairman of the directors and the spokesman of the delegation:—

Chairman: Has not the Workers' Guild considered the statement we drew up and presented to you in order to explain the natural limits of the pay fund?

Spokesman: Yes, sir; but it may be possible—

Chairman: I know what you would say, but that statement was drawn up by our guild experts. Surely your guild does not want to question the management of an owners' guild?

Spokesman (who made the sign of the Cross): God forbid, sir! But what can we do? Our guild can prove that every means has been used to deal out the pay equitably and within the bounds of the pay fund; but as the Agriculturists' Guild has been so heavily fined by the Earth Owners' Guild, and has had to send huge supplies of wheat without remuneration to the Chinese factories for the Earth Owners' Guild, we have had to pay for our bread, and the price rises.

Chairman: We know all that, and we have taken action. The State service will deliver flour among you as soon as it can be done. Have we failed you, or has the State failed you, in the past? The State now cares for you in a thousand ways which your grandfathers would have thought only possible in heaven; but now, because you have had to pay something out of your allowances to help the free wheat supply in time of shortage, you grumble. As the pay fund stands now, each miner receives threepence per day, and, with everything found by the State, from baths to pew-rents, from porridge to bootlaces, he has this amount to squander on his family's amusements. No wonder the bishops cry against the evils of luxury and irresponsibility. You must go back and advise your guild to reconsider our experts' statement. We have been too indulgent to allow this delegation, since it shocks morality to think that your guild should come to question the managing of the mines, and it looks as if you had such vicious intentions.

Spokesman: God forbid, sir! (So that no wrong opinion may go abroad as to the loyal and moral intentions of the delegation, we may say that each delegate made the sign of the Cross when the charge was made.)

The above was sent to us with the information that the delegates returned to the directors after a consultation with their committee of committees, and announced that the demand (?) was withdrawn, as the State was about to make the wheat grants.

A correspondent has found a curious idiom in an old newspaper, and he asks us what is its origin. The phrase is "to strike work." We believe this phrase can be traced to the Esperanto, an old language, known

only to little coteries called Bands of Hope, which societies existed in the dark ages when men drank beer. We understand that "to strike work" signified "to cease work while the workers' delegates made arrangements for a recommencement of work at an equivalent or a lower rate of pay." As a cessation of work could not be endured, it has happily been prevented, and the old idiom has dropped out of use, although our workers' delegates religiously continue to do their duty and contend for the M.D.P.

We are told that the third son of Lord Ice tripe was initiated into the preliminary mysteries of the Offal Capital and Tool Owners' Guild last Thursday.

Two young men, apprentices of the Weavers' Guild, were convicted at the Weavers' Central Court yesterday for reading poetry and uttering blasphemy. They pleaded guilty to the charges of reading literature useless to members of labour guilds and to making certain blasphemous statements about tool owners. They were handed over to the Guild of Flagellants and Carpet Beaters for a two-year treatment.

Like the inventor of the compass, the genius who proposed our first Labour Guilds is unhonoured by a monument, yet a grateful race pays homage to his anonymity. We know the various theories too well. A few academics trace the idea of the guilds to a body of writers of a weekly journal which flourished in the early twentieth century, but our Labour Guilds are so entirely different in structure and operation from the National Guilds of this school that we cannot give much consideration to this explanation. Some say that our great benefactor chose to hide himself under the pseudonym of Gosling; but others say, upon the authority of our best grammarians and naturalists, that Gosling is a young goose, and that this Gosling had a forerunner whose real name or pseudonym was Goose. But let all this rest. Whoever he was, whatever his name, he has our admiration and our thanks.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE EMPLOYERS' PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION.

Sir,—I notice the Employers' Parliamentary Association is again very active. Perhaps a brief statement of my experience may be interesting and throw a little light on the game known as "The Seduction of Labour Leaders."

In June, 1915, at the time when the Northcliffe Press was instigating the conscription agitation, calling it "National Service," I wrote a letter to the Editor of the "Times," advocating *real* national service. Evidently it was so badly written that the "Times" took it to be in support of *its* idea of national service. After my signature, I gave the office I held in a branch of my trade union. Now, although at that time I was not known as a trade unionist to above forty or fifty people, the "Times" referred to me in a leader as "a prominent Birmingham trade unionist"!

Soon after this came a letter from the secretary of the E.P.A., saying that Sir Charles Macara had read my letter and instructed him to forward to me this, that, and the other leaflet, pamphlet, etc.

I replied that I was not what he supposed. Incidentally I may say that one of the enclosures was a suggested form for registration. Almost identical with that issued by the Government months later!

H.

"THE NEW AGE."

Sir,—In renewing my subscription I should like to express my appreciation of the quality of THE NEW AGE, which is now, as it has been for a long time past, of a very high sort indeed. That you are able to respond so wonderfully to the greatness of the times is the best possible testimony to the value of your ideas. I feel much indebted to the writer of "Notes of the Week," to "R. H. C.," and to other of your admirable contributors for pleasures from which I should have been entirely separated these many months of Army service had it not been for their work in your columns.

C. B. PURDON.

THE PRESS.

Sir,—Even the most stupid readers of the daily Press must have been shaken in their faith in the omniscience of the great organs when they saw the confusion into which the Wilson Note has cast them. The "readings" of the Note were as various as the organs, and, indeed, more various, since practically every daily boxed the compass of possible interpretation. To the outsider, no doubt, the explanation is sufficient that the Note was of such a character that even the wisest of editors might be confused by it. The insider, on the other hand, has a simpler explanation: the Press was left without official information! The "Times" itself, I believe, has for once failed to procure its exclusive information, and hence can no longer pose as being more sapient than the rest of the Press. Lord Northcliffe is as completely out of the secret as any small provincial editor. Is it because, I ask, the secret is not safe at this stage in public hands? I venture to say that we shall not know the origin of Wilson's Note for another fifty years. In the meantime, anybody may guess.

OLD JOURNALIST.

GUILDS AND MR. BERTRAND RUSSELL.

Sir,—Mr. Bertrand Russell's new book was an agreeable surprise to me, as it seems to have been also to your reviewer. Judging by various remarks made in and out of print by my fellow-Guildsmen, I was unprepared to find in it a lucid and cogent exposition of that principle of individual liberty which is the starting point of a crusade against wage slavery.

The N.G.L. owes a huge debt to two or three men who have not joined its ranks or accepted all its constructive proposals. Mr. Belloc has shown clearly, and once for all, the downward track along which State Socialism is leading us. We have still to marshal our forces against that enemy, but we need never lack ammunition with that wonderful little yellow book in our hands. That Mr. Belloc's remedy is not ours makes but little difference in the value of the aid he brings us.

And now again Mr. Russell is working for us, though not under our banner. I suppose it is because I have tried, and tried in vain, to convince people much abler than myself that wage slavery is deadening and damnable that I welcome this volume as a boon to our cause.

Most exponents of National Guilds take the evil of wage slavery as an axiom, and I do not blame them, for it is their lot to address people who have learnt from bitter experience to hate it. I, on the other hand, have been met in my humble efforts at progaganda by a blank refusal to acknowledge the need for personal expression in what Morris called one's "bread and cheese work." How is one to reply when a man near the top of a learned profession says, "The work by which I earn my living is pure drudgery. I am quite willing to accept it as task-work for the sake of the leisure it earns me to devote to the work I love. I am as much a wage slave in this respect as the factory hand, provided he has as much leisure as I. Of course, I see that it is most unfair that he should have to devote his whole life to task-work and earn only barely enough to live on, but modern reforms are gradually remedying that injustice. When you claim that every man should have a sense of directing his own labour, should be a conscious agent in the production he is assisting, you are asking for something unnecessary as well as impossible."

Now, just as the State Socialist is answered by Mr. Belloc, so the upholder of task-work is answered by Mr. Russell. If all work of national importance is to be done as drudgery for the sake of the wage paid for it, then we are doing all we can to emphasise and encourage the "possessive impulses" at the expense of the "creative," while the whole gist of Mr. Russell's argument is that "the supreme principle, both in politics and in private life, should be to promote all that is creative, and so to diminish the impulses and desires that centre round possession."

A MEMBER OF THE N.G.L.

"LONDON PRIDE."

Sir,—In his anxiety to be no more polite than Nature evidently intended him to be, Mr. John Francis Hope has missed the point of my letter. I remember

almost fulsomely allowing that Mr. Hope's judgment of Miss Unger's humour might be the correct one; but even so, I asked, was it just to assume, as he did, that none of the good but only all the bad things in the play were hers? For in that case what an indictment of Mr. Neil Lyons' choice of collaborator! Mr. Hope says that he could, "if it were worth while, trace the two styles of work right through the play." Having seen the authors' names, perhaps he could, by the simple means which he appears to have adopted of attributing all the bad parts to Miss Unger and all the good to Mr. Lyons. By the same token Mr. Hope is not alone in his glory; for I can certainly trace in fancy two styles (masculine and feminine) of writing in Mr. Hope's letter. But though I do not like the street the lady lives in, I must congratulate rather than condole with him on his better half. Her way of writing of women is all one can wish for from one lady to another!

Apropos of Congreve, does it follow, because Mrs. Hope says it does, that, if women in general have no sense of humour, no woman has any humour? Is it not women in general who generalise from particulars?
M. G. S.

Memoranda.

(From last week's NEW AGE.)

What is essential in the presentation of our case is as much in the *promise* an Allied victory holds out to the world as in the mere dread of the sequel of a German victory.

We must show that the Allies, too, have a world-plan, consonant with the aspirations of American democracy, and, therefore, in America's eyes, superior to the world-plan of Germany, which, with no less zeal, efficiency, and idealising than Germany, we mean, if we are victorious, to carry out.

The more completely Mr. Chamberlain delegates control to the industries themselves, the more likely we are to become properly organised.

Must not the prospect of the liberation of subject classes be as clearly before Labour as the prospect of the liberation of subject States?—"Notes of the Week."

For over two years the wage-system has been in abeyance in regard to over five million men.—S. G. H.

The principle to be followed is not the mass levy, but the stern limitation, or even the destruction, of industries that are uneconomic in peace or in war.

Our war strength is measured by our economic power.—"National Guildsman."

Labour is observing an honourable armistice, but the conditions which lead to industrial strife remain.

What one needs most is a campaign to bring home to business men that the organising of a large industry is far more full of interest than the making of private profit.—J. ST. GEORGE HEATH.

The most obvious and salient fact in connection with what, for briefness' sake, I may call guild labour, is the strict alliance which exists between it and the spirit of liberty.

No fact is written more indelibly across the page of history than this, that the growth of liberty is followed instantly and inevitably by healthy conditions of self-controlled labour, while the decline of liberty is followed as inevitably by conditions of servile labour.—L. MARCH PHILLIPPS.

It is probable that Irish railways are run more to disorganise Irish industry than to help it!—C. E. BECHHOFFER.

The Irish Renaissance is destined before long to flower into a form of classical English or to dwindle to a literary weed.—R. H. C.

Life was born from Hatred's thigh,
And Love has wept to find it so.
HORACE DE VERE COLE.

PRESS CUTTINGS.

In the current issue of the "Economic Journal" Professor Pigou has an interesting article dealing with the rate of interest likely to obtain after the war. He regards the sale of our foreign investments as a matter of small importance, for against our diminishing holdings of American and similar securities we are lending so much to our Allies that in all probability we shall not be down on balance more than, say, £200,000,000 in respect of our capital claims upon foreign countries. The writer does not go into the question of whether the new securities are as good as the old. The conclusions Professor Pigou comes to are that, if the export of British capital for new enterprises is prohibited, the rate of interest ruling here after the war will probably be a little, but not much, higher than it was before, but that, if the exportation of capital for new enterprises is not prohibited, the rate of interest on gilt-edged securities will probably be 5 per cent., or may be even 6 per cent., for three or four years, slowly falling thereafter. Although he does not advocate the total prohibition of the investment of capital abroad, Professor Pigou is evidently of opinion that the Government should take power to prevent anti-social foreign investments, and, he states, "the high rate of interest obtainable abroad must not be allowed to keep capital away from forms of home investments whose social utility is inadequately represented in the rate of interest which they afford"—house accommodation, for instance. In his article, however, Professor Pigou gives only the two alternatives of prohibition or non-interference with the investment of capital abroad in new enterprises. Surely there is a third way—viz., the controlling of the export of capital. The Government might, for example, permit the investment of British capital in the Dominions and Allied countries, but not in other countries. This seems to me to be the most likely course to be adopted.—EMIL DAVIES in "The New Statesman."

In the Industrial market we have seen an extraordinary rise in almost every security. As the reports come out each week they show that not only have the companies made bigger profits than they ever made before, but that they have made them after paying the Government Excess Profits Duty of 60 per cent. Therefore the profits have been fabulous. We all thought that this Excess Profits Duty was a sound scheme. We now see that it is one of the most foolish taxes that was ever put on. All it has done has been to increase the cost of living by from 100 to 200 per cent. and increase the cost of the War in the same proportion. The Government will probably make one hundred millions out of the tax, and it will probably lose a thousand millions. I and every other writer on finance made a complete and hopeless mess of the business. We called out that firms dealing with the Government should repay to the country the additional profits they were making out of the orders given by the country. This looked quite sound, but the actual effect of the tax has been to add 60 per cent. to the cost of the goods before sending in a quotation and then add another 30 per cent. for contingencies. It is an absolute truth that it is the consumer who pays the tax.—MR. RAYMOND RADCLIFFE in "The New Witness."

How can this waste best be stopped? By the intricately foolish measures we have been examining, or by the simple method of taking away from the consumers the money which they spend on these unnecessary goods and services, and so stopping the industries which produce them? The latter is at once the true economy and the only safe finance of war. Conscript wealth, if you like to call it so. Remove, either by income or property taxation, or by a high compulsory loan, as much as possible of the superfluous income which is expended in demand for the luxuries, comforts, and unnecessary. By such means you will compel the labour to flow voluntarily from those stopped or damaged industries into those which are indispensable and which

offer employment. Sufficiently high taxation will force the well-to-do to retrench expenditure, and this retrenchment will set free labour and materials for employment in the vital industries of the country. There are still tens of thousands of private gardeners, cultivating flowers and not food. These men could be absorbed in agriculture, if their well-to-do employers could no longer afford to pay their wages. . . . Had this sound policy of national finance been applied with rigour early in the war, both our financial and our economic situation would be immensely stronger than it is. Even now it is the right road to national economy and safety, while industrial conscription is the wrong road.—"The Nation."

But have the workers any settled ideas or policy ready to apply to the situation that now confronts them? In the past, many opportunities have been missed simply because we did not know what to demand nor even what we wanted, whereas capital is always ready in advance with plans and schemes, and consequently always comes off best. This is quite clear in politics, where, owing to the "preparedness" of capital, it is almost impossible to weaken its position by legislation.

Why not start at once to seriously consider and discuss these important questions? We railwaymen, with our powerful organisation and our weekly journal, ought to be able very quickly to create a "school of thought" of our own, which would soon crystallise and provide us with a definite policy. When there is half an hour to spare at a branch or district council meeting, why not open an informal discussion on this subject? Not so much to arrive at hasty conclusions as to educate ourselves to the exact nature of the problem awaiting solution, and to weigh and examine our own ideas and also those put forward by the other side. At the present time we have the anomaly of State control of the railways without a single representative of the working railwaymen on the Railway Executive Committee, which is composed exclusively of general managers, or, in other words, the nominees of the shareholders' directors. Let us set about the democratisation of industry and the election of our own representatives on the management.—"Railway Review."

Verse 1. Let a Brahman, having dwelt with a preceptor during the first quarter of a man's life, pass the second quarter of human life in his own house, when he has contracted a legal marriage.

Verses 2 and 3 lay down that he must live with the least possible injury to animated beings, and may acquire property by irreproachable occupations, peculiar to his class.

Verse 4. He may live by *rita* and *amrita*, or, if necessary, by *mrita* or *pramrita*, or even by *satyanrita*; but never let him subsist by *swavritti*.

Verse 5. By *rita* must be understood lawful gleaning and gathering; by *amrita*, what is given unasked; by *mrita*, what is asked as alms; tillage is called *pramrita*.

Verse 6. Traffic and money-lending are *satyanrita*; even by them, when he is deeply distressed, may he support life; but service for hire is named *swavritti* or dog-living, and, of course, he must by all means avoid.—The Institutes of Manu.

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